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PERIODICALS DEPARTMENT

EDITORIAL

CROSSING THE DIVIDE

The opening of the Berlin wall symbolically marks the end of an era, that of revolution from above and from abroad. It foreshadows the disappearance of the great divide separating two halves of Europe and two conflicting social systems. This prospect, however, depends on the dissolution of Eastern and Western blocs and thus of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Only when that occurs can German reunification be put on Europe's agenda. There will be time enough to draw up the balance sheet and ponder the consequences; now we should rejoice at the crumbling of the wall under popular pressure.

Those who take the occasion to celebrate the funeral of socialism show their ignorance of its principles. In 1953 a workers' uprising in Berlin was crushed by tanks, causing Bertolt Brecht to remark bitterly that if people disagree with the rulers the simple solution is to "dissolve the people." Recently, however, Hans Modrow, the new East German Prime Minister, argued that a party deprived of popular support does not deserve to rule. Although Modrow is obviously swept along by the tide of events, while the men who sent in the tanks were more firmly in command, he is much closer to socialist principles than they ever were, because effective socialism is inseparable from democracy.

Those who would dig the grave for socialism have one valid point: that its identification with Stalinism and then with imported revolution has largely discredited the very idea. To be resurrected, socialism may have to be partly reinvented. But the ideological morticians are wrong in assuming that this death of an epoch heralds a capitalist eternity. The lesson of events in East Germany is that people inspired by an idea can bring down walls. Two centuries after the French Revolution there are plenty of Bastilles to be stormed.

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FORMULA FOR PROFITS

HEATING UP THE BOTTLE BATTLE

FRANK A. OSKI

Early this year millions of viewers of *Wheel of Fortune* and other network television programs began seeing commercials starring a 6-month-old baby happily guzzling a new infant formula from the Carnation Company called Good Nature H.A. In October Gerber Products served up "Nursing Mother," a thirty-second spot that shows an infant sucking contentedly at her mother's breast. The voice-over concedes that mother's milk is the "most complete baby food" but quickly adds, "Nothing comes closer to your own milk than Gerber Baby Formula."

The slickness of these commercials may be nothing new, but their appearance in living rooms all over the country signals a major change in how infant formula is marketed. Until last year, formula manufacturers advertised exclusively to physicians about the virtues of their products and hoped that these pediatricians and family doctors would counsel parents to start feeding their babies formula sooner rather than later. But now Carnation and Gerber have decided to make their pitch directly to Mom and Dad in multimillion-dollar advertising campaigns on television and in print.

Nearly 60 percent of all mothers in the United States initially breast-feed their babies, yet the infant formula industry enjoys annual sales of $1.6 billion. This seeming paradox is due to the fact that less than 20 percent of mothers breast-feed for as long as six months, even though it is beneficial to do so for at least that long. Moreover, when breast-feeding

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LETTERS.

'THE TRAIL SHE BLAZED'

Rochester, Minn.
We mourn Penny Lernoux's death, and not only because she was a fine reporter and analyst. She also took the time to encourage young American journalists who hoped to journey, however modestly, down the trail she blazed.

I met Penny several times, most recently this past spring when she returned to lecture for an evening at Macalester College in St. Paul, where she had served as a visiting professor in 1983.

We talked briefly about our profession, and she promised to write with further words of advice about freelancing from abroad. Much to my surprise and delight, she kept her word. Her June letter was not only full of good advice about the mechanics of freelancing, it ended with words that serve as a tribute to her life and her unique contributions to American journalism.

She wrote, "I think I've been blessed in my experience because Latin America has changed my life—if I hadn't leapt when I did, I would never have acquired the vision and values of the Third World poor. I have a purpose in my life, and that, I think, is worth more than money or the prestige of a high-powered job."

No more eloquent words could ever be spoken about her career. *Chris Herlinger*

DOCTOROW'S MIRROR

Panama City, Fla.
The article containing the text of E.L. Doctorow's speech and the accompanying chronology, "'A Gangsterdom of the Spirit'" [Oct. 2], stands out as one of the finest pieces I have read in *The Nation*. With a constant blizzard of vile news heaped upon our heads, new acts of evil, brutality and pernicious greed no longer retain their mind- and heart-stabbing quality; they are only another layer of the grim fog surrounding us, dulling the small flickers of truth and justice which so seldom shine through.

Thank God for Doctorow. His speech is a blazing beacon exposing a society off course. He gives me hope. Maybe the very spiritual essence of our country has been usurped by Ronald Reagan, James Watt, Martin Peretz and the rest of their ilk, but as long as we have men such as Doctorow and the late Abbie Hoffman to "hold the mirror up wherein we see ourselves" all is not lost.

Rob Middlemas

POLICY REVIEW

New York City
As a graduate of Brandeis University (class of '82) I was more than interested to read E.L. Doctorow's commencement address. I found it rather sad that the *Brandeis Review* initially chose not to run what was probably the most important lecture of the year given on campus. Also, it seems rather peculiar to hear that the *Brandeis Review* has a "policy" not to reprint commencement speeches. It had no problem printing the keynote speech given by Abba Eban at the Founders' Day convocation in its spring issue.

Malka Margolies

THE SUNSHINE BOY

Boston
Polite applause greeted Martin Peretz at Brandeis University's graduation in May, but a loud Bronx cheer would have been more fitting. His ad hominem diatribe against E.L. Doctorow's masterful commencement address was truly pathetic.

On that Saturday in May, threatening skies gave way to sunshine as Doctorow eloquently exhorted young people embarking on their careers to rise above the "I got mine" ethics of the Reagan era. And rise they did, with a thunderous, prolonged ovation. To the extent that Brandeis is still a bastion of the American Jewish middle class, it was heartening to see the "rank and file" respond so favorably to Doctorow's critique from the left.

Happily, a few of our thinkers and cultural leaders never became apologists for nor cleaved to the narrowness and rampant meanness that has so defiled this country during the Reagan-Bush (and Koch) years.

K. Silver

TRADE WINDS

San Francisco
Thank you for publishing Susan Eisenberg's excellent article about tradeswomen ["Women Hard Hats Speak Out," Sept. 18]. I've worked as an electrician since changing careers in 1976 and I, too, almost always have been the only woman on my crew, often the only woman on the job site. My fear is that those of us who entered the skilled trades in the 1970s will remain a little bump on the demographic scale till the end of our careers, and that few young women will join us. Sex discrimination is alive and well in the blue-collar trades.

Readers may be interested to know that Susan Eisenberg is a contributor to an anthology I have edited, *Hard-Hatted Women: Stories of Struggle and Success in the Trades* (Seal Press). In this collection of first-person narratives, twenty-six women chronicle our fight to enter and stay in non-traditional blue-collar jobs. Susan is also the author of a wonderful book of poems about working as an electrician, *It's a Good Thing I'm Not Macho* (Whetstone Press).

Molly Martin

OF GODS AND MEN

Omaha, Neb.
It was sad to hear the so-called civil rights leaders denouncing Ralph Abernathy's statements from his book *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down*. Abernathy saw Martin Luther King in questionable circumstances with women. This is a paradox many African-American leaders are confronted with: wine, women and the struggle. Too often, many confuse their priorities and thereby retard the struggle.

As many run to repudiate the words of Abernathy, they demonstrate their ignorance and detract from the credibility of their message. . . . Others, such as David Garrow in his scholarly Pulitzer Prize–winning work *Bearing the Cross*, delineate King's weakness for women. This bit of history must be measured along with the great contributions he made to this society.

King achieved an important place in history because he preached a message of nonviolence. . . . Many of us are confronted with the question, Can the message be separated from the messenger? If he or she demonstrates contradictory messages, what can we believe? We are living in a so-called Christian nation, yet when we read the paper or watch TV news, people are doing many unchristian acts. We live in a society that purports to support life, yet we offer little substance to those who are living in poverty. We claim to believe in peace, yet billions of dollars from our national budget are devoted to producing weapons of death. We go to church each Sunday, but as Malcolm X said, "Sunday is the most segregated time in America."

King, like many other African-American leaders, wrestled with problems and his weakness. For Jesse Jackson, Benjamin Hooks, Joseph Lowery and Andrew Young to attempt to stifle the truth reflects their frailty. One questions how many of them have committed the same sin. Our children see our behavior and mimic us in undesirable ways. Teenage pregnancies and out-of-wedlock births are internal problems which are symptomatic of our lack of respect for ourselves.

Dispossessed people are often searching for godlike personalities to avoid holding themselves accountable to higher standards. This recent revelation about Martin Luther King will help us to consider that he was a man and not a god.

A'Jamal-Rashad Byndon

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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EDITORIALS.

Tet in Salvador

The Salvadoran poet Roque Dalton once wrote that his country was afflicted with "cancers, peels, dandruffs, crud, sores, fractures, shakes, stenches." That was before the United States got involved; $4 billion in U.S. aid has turned El Salvador into hell. Since the government of Alfredo Cristiani took office in June, what little space there was for dissent has vanished. The death squads run wild; participants in the most innocuous civic activity once more risk being dragged into the dungeons of the Treasury Police, raped, hooded with the *capucha* filled with quicklime. Once such things stirred passions on Capitol Hill; now Senator Christopher Dodd, who passes for the liberal conscience of the Democratic Party in such matters, says Cristiani is "our best bet" in El Salvador.

This latest pattern of outrages escalated on October 31 with the bombing of the Fenastras union offices, which moved Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Af-

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fairs Bernard Aronson to hop on a plane to San Salvador to ask the far right to cool it. The answer came that same night when Salvadoran troops murdered two organizers of the center-left Popular Social Christian Movement. Army to Aronson: Take a hike. Smarter than its paymasters, the army knows that human rights scruples no longer impede the flow of dollars.

The guerrillas of the F.M.L.N. responded to the Fenastras bombing by breaking off peace talks with the government and by launching, on November 11, their largest offensive of the ten-year war. Whatever its outcome, the offensive was an extraordinary show of force, involving great risks, and its goal seems to have been, at a minimum, to force the government back to the negotiating table, acknowledging once and for all that no settlement will be possible without the rebels' acquiescence.

The logic of this war has never varied. The only result of building a "shield for democracy"—as the Kissinger commission termed it in 1984—has been to subordinate all civilian authority to the military thugs. "Where is Cristiani? Who's running the country?" the rebels ask repeatedly over Radio Venceremos. Even if we grant that he represents a business class sick of war because it interferes with making profits, the fact is that Cristiani has no more room for independent action than his predecessor, José Napoleón Duarte. When army officers showed up for the first time at the October peace talks in San José, Costa Rica, they appeared to believe that the purpose was to negotiate the terms of an F.M.L.N. surrender. After the November offensive, that self-delusion is no longer tenable.

But the Salvadoran right wing has always been an incarnation of human evil in its purest form, and removing the capacity for self-delusion from such people does not necessarily inspire a capacity for reason. Instead, it has reduced them to their most obscene instincts. Slum areas are strafed and rocketed; even as we go to press, news comes that six Jesuit priests, their cook and her teenage daughter were dragged from their beds at 3 A.M. by soldiers and killed. Among the dead was Ignacio Ellacuría, rector of the Central American University, who had been for years El Salvador's most dogged advocate of a peaceful settlement. The army has served notice that it will no longer tolerate such voices. This is now a war to the death.

The U.S. response to these events has been to step up arms shipments and lie about the source of the guerrillas' strength. There is, as usual, the obliging truckload of Soviet-bloc arms, allegedly intercepted in Honduras last month. Maybe there was such a truck; maybe it came through from Costa Rica and the Nicaraguans failed to intercept it; maybe some helpful *contras* in Honduras fitted it up; maybe it never existed. The question in the end is academic. The Administration's pitiful fictions about what is happening in El Salvador may serve a larger purpose. As the Yalta-to-Malta summit draws near, Secretary of State James Baker accuses the Soviet Union of supporting "acts of terror" in Central America. In the Salvadoran offensive, the Administration may have found its pretext for remaining immobile on the entire spectrum of East-West issues. At one side of the table in Malta will sit a statesman; the other seat will be occupied by a man who calmly bankrolls the murderers of priests.

Moderates' Day?

The election of four black candidates to high office in important localities on the same day should indicate that a new progressive politics is developing around the country. If so, the indications have been largely ignored. Even before voters went to the polls in the scattered off-off-year elections, Democratic politicians and media commentators were straining to put a very different spin on the predicted victories of David Dinkins in New York, L. Douglas Wilder in Virginia, John Daniels in New Haven and Norm Rice in Seattle. The conventional wisdom quickly produced the line that "black moderates" won precisely because of their moderation, which in this case meant catering to white racial fears, keeping Jesse Jackson at more than arm's length, stroking anxious Jewish voters and contributors, and avoiding the progressive political agenda like the plague.

A few days after his squeaker win (a re-count may follow) Wilder told a meeting of the centrist Southern-based Democratic Leadership Council that future Democratic presidential candidates should heed the lessons of his election and embrace "the values of the overwhelming majority of the people in this country." In D.L.C. terms, that entails running on a platform of high military budgets, cold war foreign policy, reduced social spending and tax abatements. Virginia Senator Charles Robb, one of Wilder's predecessors as governor, seconded Wilder's suggestions and condemned the "liberal fundamentalism" of progressive Democrats, "activists and interest groups who exercise disproportionate influence over the party's nominating process." Whenever a Democrat with national aspirations starts condemning the nominating process, it must mean that his ambitions are about to take a giant leap.

Not for the first time, the prophets of the center are disregarding history and reality in their eagerness to rationalize their own interests. The success of African-American candidates was a direct result of the most far-reaching social mobilization in this century—the campaign to enfranchise blacks who by law or custom had been excluded from the political process. That drive began in the red-dirt counties of the Deep South in the early 1960s, and it continues to this day in the ghettos of the North. In its most recent form the mobilization has been led by Jesse Jackson, who not only helped register millions of new voters but injected enormous energy and a sense of possibility into black communities all over the nation. The resulting empowerment provided the base that led directly to the victories of the four candidates, and many others less publicized, in November.

From the beginning, the mobilization had a political dimension as well as a racial one. It is important that blacks be visible in positions of power, but the symbols must have substance. Too many times, a people's representative once

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in power ignores the needs of the people—women, labor unionists, farmers or any other struggling community that Chuck Robb et al. disparagingly call "special interests." Because needy communities rarely have enough electoral power to install their own members in office (if they did, they wouldn't be struggling), they form coalitions with groups that have similar political needs—and thus give lasting, institutional substance to the symbols.

The Rainbow Coalition that produced Jesse Jackson's presidential primary victories in almost every major city of the country last year became the base for many of the local black (and progressive) candidates this time. In New York City, the vast majority of Dinkins's support—in campaign work as well as votes—came from the same area as the Jackson rainbow. This support is in no way automatic. A candidate who could not make a commitment to the coalition, even tacitly, would surely lose the election.

The problem comes when the candidate goes further and seeks votes and social legitimization, in the form of press endorsements and big contributions, from those who are opposed to everything the coalition stands for. Dinkins did some of that; Wilder did a lot more. (Daniels and Rice do not fit the catchall "black moderate" label attached to them.) By doing so, they make it all the more likely that they will remain merely symbolic figures, that they will sacrifice the needs of their broad base—for economic investment, social restructuring and extended empowerment—to the demands of the few outside the coalition who may have put them over the top.

Dinkins got less than 30 percent of the so-called white vote. Of that, a significant minority was already in the progressive coalition that promoted his candidacy in the first place. He got very little support from the "white ethnics" he spent so much time "reassuring" about crime, drugs, taxes and whatever else his pollsters came up with. Perhaps that was what he had to do this time. But soon another candidate will be able to extend the coalition right into that constituency with economic, class and empowerment issues. Neither politics nor society is static, as the Robb/Wilder theory holds. The point of politics is to change society, and thus move from symbol to substance.

Haiti Goes Back

The government of Gen. Prosper Avril, the President of Haiti, has decided to put all pretense aside and get down to the business of governing in the style to which Haitian dictators have become accustomed. For months, soldiers and government officials in the countryside have been interrupting or forbidding meetings of opposition activists, suppressing demonstrations and arresting, beating, torturing and sometimes killing members of democratic or peasant organizations. All this has become routine, and is done on the quiet, at least as far as the international news media are concerned, while Avril announces to the world that he is proceeding "relentlessly" toward democratic elections. This talk has also quieted his most vocal critics among the likely presidential candidates.

On October 30 a group of thirty-three popular democratic organizations held a press conference in Port-au-Prince to protest the deteriorating human rights situation and to declare a month of nonviolent resistance to the regime, to culminate in a Day of Refusal march on November 29, the second anniversary of Haiti's aborted elections. Apparently this was too much for Avril. On the evening of November 1, a truckload of soldiers from the Presidential Guard arrested three of the best-known leaders from the press conference: Evans Paul, a former journalist who was jailed by Jean-Claude Duvalier and is now the head of the Confederation of Democratic Unity; Jean-Auguste Mesyeux, co-director of the Autonomous Haitian Workers Federation, Haiti's largest labor union; and Etienne Marineau, a former sergeant from the Presidential Guard who was one of the soldiers who helped bring Avril to power in September 1988 and was later dismissed.

The next night, at prime time on the state-run television station, Maj. Leopold Clerjeune, of the newly baptized Anti-Gang Service (formerly Recherches Criminelles, the political police), read an announcement: The three men had been arrested because they were planning a "terrorist" action against the government, in which the President and all the officers of the army were to be assassinated along with "certain civilians," and a popular militia would be installed to run the country.

As Clerjeune spoke, the camera kept panning off to his left. There stood the three accused, on exhibit like the arrested students in China: Evans Paul, his face swollen almost beyond recognition, his white shirt bloodied; next to him was Marineau, his right eye swollen shut; finally, Mesyeux, a bandage across the top of his head, his face bruised. They were not allowed to speak.

For a week the three men were held incommunicado. On November 9 they were brought into court and formally accused. Their physical appearance was shocking. The three said they had been beaten by a contingent of forty men while in custody and that the charges against them were false. They were then remanded to the penitentiary.

The phony conspiracy propaganda was not unusual from a regime that has been crying "communist" for months as it sets about decimating the opposition. What is more ominous is that the government took its repressive violence to a new level by exhibiting its victims on television. Avril has thus put the government's seal of approval on the torture of political prisoners and sent a warning to the opposition that protests will not be tolerated.

A full week after the men were shown on television, the State Department issued this weak and cynical statement: "The U.S. government urges the government of Haiti to ensure that any detainees are treated in strict accordance with Haitian law and with respect for their civil and human rights. At the same time, we urge all factions in Haiti to forgo violence. We believe that free and credible elections leading to the inauguration of a civilian government is an essential step in finding solutions to Haiti's problems." The U.S. Administration still stands by its earlier conclusion that

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Avril is Haiti's best chance for democracy, and by urging all factions to forgo violence, it implicitly endorses the Haitian government's charges against the three men. But that's no surprise, since the outgoing American Ambassador, Brunson McKinley, told a U.S. human rights delegation to Haiti not long ago, "I don't see any evidence of a [Haitian] policy against human rights, any more than they have a policy about anything else. . . . It's been the law of the jungle out there."

The State Department habitually supports the wrong man for the job in Haiti: from the 1950s to the 1970s the Duvaliers, father and son, who never held elections; in 1987, Gen. Henri Namphy, who preceded Avril in the presidential palace and helped mastermind the massacre of voters that stopped elections dead. The prospects for free and fair elections are no brighter under the current regime. It is time for the U.S. government to recognize a simple fact: Dictators have no interest in democracy. AMY WILENTZ

Amy Wilentz's book, The Rainy Season: Haiti Since Duvalier, *was published in June by Simon and Schuster.*

UNCIVIL LIBERTIES.

CALVIN TRILLIN

My dentist—Sweeney Todd, D.D.S.—had his receptionist phone me to say that I should come in for an appointment. I figured Sweeney was having cash-flow problems again.

"What is it this time?" I asked the receptionist.

"He says that he was looking at your X-rays, and you need a crown in the lower left something or other," she said.

"I don't mean what is it with me," I said. "What is it with him? Did the kid's college tuition bill just come in? Wife redecorate the rumpus room? Would you mind just shouting back there and asking him how much he owes for what? I'd like to get myself prepared."

"I can't," the receptionist said. "He's in the Caribbean until next Tuesday."

"I was afraid of something like this," I said.

"Before he left he gave me a list of patients to call," she said. "He told me that he'll need you for an hour on the first appointment."

"An hour on the first appointment?" I said. "Sounds like Jamaica. Or maybe Antigua. This is definitely no cheapie to the Bahamas. That time he went to the Bahamas he only needed me for a half-hour session with the dental hygienist. May I ask if he took the wife and kids?"

"And his in-laws," the receptionist said.

"Erghh," I said, with some feeling. "I think we're talking gold crown here. Maybe even root canal. That mother-in-law of his lives high off the hog."

I showed up for the hour appointment anyway. What's the alternative? I don't think I'm up to auto-dentistry. I can't imagine myself bellying up to the mirror, opening my mouth wide, and saying, "Is it just my imagination, or does that bicuspid look a little shaky?"

I could switch dentists, of course, but I've become sort of used to old Sweeney. If you listen closely while he's working on your teeth—you have to listen closely because, being rather clumsy, he makes a lot of noise banging around the instruments—you can hear him mumbling about whatever expense in the Todd family it was that got you into the chair in the first place. After years of that, I suppose I'd feel something was missing if a dentist didn't accompany his drilling with a lot of talk about how much electricians charge for a simple rewiring job these days.

Besides, I don't know any other dentists. I don't admit that to Sweeney Todd, D.D.S., of course. In fact, I've been telling him for years that some friends of mine are always singing the praises of the dentist they all go to—a relatively recent arrival from Kyoto known to his grateful patients as Magic Fingers Yamamoto.

"They say he's got the touch of an angel," I said of Yamamoto, as I settled into the chair and prepared myself for the assaults of a deeply tanned Sweeney Todd, D.D.S. I had to raise my voice a bit, since Sweeney, in his effort to recover a mirror he had dropped, had knocked the rest of his instruments onto the floor.

"Open wide, please," Sweeney said. He has never been affected in the slightest by talk of Magic Fingers Yamamoto.

"Also, Yamamoto belongs to some Buddhist sect that believes the exchange of large sums of money corrupts the soul," I continued. "For crowns and bridges, he does wonders with the same material used for the common paper clip. His fees, of course, are nominal. Basically, he seeks his rewards in inner fulfillment. He spits on money—or he would if he weren't so polite."

"Spit, please," Sweeney said.

Sweeney had stopped his banging around and was standing next to his instrument cabinet peering at some X-rays. "What do you see there, Sweeney?" I asked. "A new transmission for your BMW? A long weekend with the missis in the Adirondacks?"

Sweeney held the X-rays up to the window to get a better look. "Won't be able to get away for the next few weekends," Sweeney said. "We're doing an addition to the kitchen."

"You never cease to amaze me, Sweeney," I said. "I've seen those television commercials that show doctors seeing all sorts of little bitty doodads through the miracle of CAT scans—or not seeing them, really, because all of the patients in those commercials turn out to be O.K.—but you've got to be the only medical man who can look at an X-ray with your naked eye and see an addition to your kitchen. What's your secret?"

"I have a better X-ray machine," Sweeney said, knocking over a water glass as he turned toward me. "But it's expensive. Very expensive. Open wide, please."

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Managua

What is George Bush's face worth to you? No, come on, seriously, what's it worth? How much of your own money would you give to save that smirking visage from public embarrassment? How much of your own time would you donate so that his proud honkings would not diminish into some low, shameful bleat? Some shuffling in the ranks, I see. Well then, how do you feel about making others pay the price and, what's more, making them pay it *deniably*, as the saying goes? For example, would the lives of nineteen young Nicaraguans seem like a lot or a little? I ask because a short distance north of here, on the Rio Blanco, on October 21, nineteen reservists were slaughtered by the *contras*, bringing to 718 the total number of Nicaraguans killed by the *contras* since the cease-fire was declared last year. The U.S. Administration, which pays for these characters, long ago gave up pretending that they could overthrow the Sandinista government. And that government had already embarked, when those murders took place, on the process of registering voters for an internationally supervised election. So what can be said to the friends and relatives of the latest victims? That their lives were forfeited for George Bush's credibility? It seems a lot to ask of them. Much more consoling to change the subject, and to speak sonorously of Daniel Ortega "shooting himself in the foot" by announcing that from now on the Sandinistas will return fire. The trouble with this liberal pharisaism is that Nicaraguans are being nonmetaphorically shot, and not in the foot either, in order that a certain face might be saved.

The State Department, which sometimes pretends not to know what the *contras* are up to, exuded a new and informed excuse for their conduct on the Rio Blanco. Up to 2,000 had reinfiltrated northern Nicaragua, a spokesman at Foggy Bottom confirmed, so as to encourage voter registration and to campaign for a vote in favor of the rightist UNO coalition. Pausing to catch one's breath at this image of armed canvassers pushing across the border with registration on their minds, one notes that the improvised lying of the State Department raises a thorny question for Congress. Even if State were speaking the truth, then the $49.7 million earmarked for "humanitarian" aid last April must be yet another backdoor slush fund for the conservative opposition. Of course, if some of the *contra* canvassers become over-enthusiastic and resort to rape and murder, the State Department can generally arrange to be adequately uninformed of the precise circumstances. This is the Bush-Baker regime's quid pro quo, in its own empire, for *perestroika*.

Be it noted, however, that even the State Department's mendacity is an oblique compliment to the Nicaraguan election process. I had the opportunity to interview Iqbal Riza, a senior Pakistani diplomat who heads the United Nations observer team, and Mario Gonzalez, a Colombian who performs the same function for the Organization of American States. (The Nicaraguan government is the first in Latin America ever to invite either body to inspect an election.) Both men testified that the registration of voters had been carried out in a punctilious manner. Neither reported any serious claim of irregularity from the contending parties.

As for the Sandinistas, in conversation they are almost pedantic in their attachment to the electoral path. They talk about opinion poll techniques, regional variations, international monitors and "balance" in the broadcast media. I had astonishing sessions with some of Tomás Borge's advisers and with senior members of the Foreign Ministry, during which, in both cases, the possibility of defeat was discussed and, in principle, accepted. It was common to hear officials who welcomed the changes in Eastern Europe—even claimed to have anticipated them—and who expressed the hope that a strong opposition would emerge in the National Assembly even if the F.S.L.N. won the day.

The difficulty is that the opposition has never abandoned the hope of coming to power as the proxy of a foreign state. I spoke to Alfredo César, the ex-*contra* leader who had returned to work for UNO (though has since been dropped from the formal campaign). He talked glibly of accepting U.S. financing, "since we would be accused of taking it anyway." This single, vulgar admission expressed the habit of dependence and clientism that has characterized the Nicaraguan right. Violeta Chamorro proclaims that her candidacy has been sanctified in personal communications from God and her husband (both of whom happen to be dead). But, in temporal terms, and as other members of her family have pointed out, her coalition contains many of her husband's enemies and breathes with the same lungs as the C.I.A.

However, if the Sandinistas carry the vote, and if the U.N. and the O.A.S. certify the elections as fair, UNO has pledged—admittedly with gritted teeth—to call on the United States to lift the ruinous embargo. That in turn would mean that the whole decade of lethal attrition and covert action has been a squalid failure from the point of view of the U.S. national security state. This conclusion is unbearable in certain quarters. The intensification of *contra* activity, directed as usual mainly at civilians, can have no other objective but the destabilization and discredit of the elections, even as lip service is being paid them.

State and C.I.A., which leaned so heavily on Arturo Cruz to try to sabotage the 1984 elections by withdrawing his doomed candidacy, now want to claim that they brought about the present elections by underwriting the *contras*! Anyone fool enough to succumb to that depraved logic should bear in mind that the elections were scheduled *before* the present phase of the *contra* assault, and *after* the *contras* had been defeated on the battlefield, and that the United States promised before international witnesses to keep its Hessians inactive during the voting. Yet when Francesc Vendrell, the U.N. official responsible for the agreed demobilization of the *contras*, was allowed a brief visit to their Honduran camps in October and actually spoke of demobilization, he was promptly and publicly savaged by James Baker. This is therefore a record not of pressure for "democratization" but of conscious, dirty warfare against it.

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ARTICLES.

FREEDOM IN EAST GERMANY

Opening Up a New Europe?

GÜNTER MINNERUP

The Berlin wall may still be standing, but it no longer divides East from West. All manner of proposals have been made about the future of the physical structure itself, ranging from Willy Brandt's suggestion that it be kept as a historical (to which one should add, bearing in mind its graffiti, artistic) monument, to the enterprising idea, put forward by a member of the Central Committee of the East German Communist Party, of selling off its bricks as numbered collector's items. As a symbol of the cold war in a divided Europe, however, the wall is now history.

Predictably enough, the Western news media and right-wing politicians have greeted the opening of the frontiers of the German Democratic Republic as yet another victory in the battle against Communism. The spectacle of hundreds of thousands of East Germans pushing through the gaps in the wall toward the shopping arcades of West Berlin and the Federal Republic—and this against the backdrop of the drive toward a market economy in Poland and Hungary—seemed conclusive proof of the historical bankruptcy of socialism and the vitality and attraction of free-market capitalism. Yet things are not that simple: One British TV journalist observed that his most powerful memory was not of the jubilant scenes of the first few hours of "freedom," but of the long lines formed later in the day by East Germans returning home.

Indeed, the joyous expressions on the faces of those stepping onto Western soil, in many cases for the first time in their lives, were hardly those of refugees. Far from celebrating their escape from the G.D.R., they were welcoming the dawn of a new age in which they could at last remain in their own country without feeling, as someone put it, "incarcerated in a huge concrete prison." Freedom at last, yes, but the freedom to leave and then return to the socialist German state.

First indications are that only a tiny minority will choose to remain in West Germany. There are even signs of a movement back to the G.D.R. among those who joined the summer exodus to the Federal Republic via Hungary and the West German embassies in Czechoslovakia and Poland. To be sure, there will always be a steady stream of migrants between two societies so closely related in language and culture but so far apart in wealth and income. By opening the borders, however, the new East German leadership has removed in a single bold stroke the principal cause of the discontent: the feeling of imprisonment and isolation, the despair that nothing would ever change for the better.

This despair had reached its height on October 7, when the fortieth anniversary of the G.D.R. was celebrated by the leadership of party and state in the most cynically self-congratulatory manner. Erich Honecker, then General Secretary of the ruling Socialist Unity Party (S.E.D.), seemed to be impressing on East Germans and guest of honor Mikhail Gorbachev alike that *perestroika* and *glasnost* were not required in the G.D.R. A little more than a week later Honecker was gone. He was pushed out of office by a Central Committee under intense pressure from huge demonstrations sweeping through all major East German cities. His successor, Egon Krenz, could only hope to regain the political initiative by making a clean break with the most deeply detested aspect of the old regime: its fencing-in of the entire citizenry.

The nature of the crisis facing the S.E.D. is revealed by the difference, or rather the lack of it, between Krenz and his predecessor. Honecker, after all, was no bloodstained Stalinist tyrant. Since 1971, when he assumed power, the G.D.R. had made considerable strides in its relations with the outside world, seen considerable liberalization in the fields of artistic and intellectual expression and tackled some of its chronic social problems, especially the housing shortage. Few of this summer's émigrés had suffered acute political persecution or economic hardship under Honecker. The malaise had different, deeper roots. Whatever progress there was had been achieved under the iron bureaucratic fist of the "Red Prussians," with little or no opportunity for the people to participate in discussions or decision making. For a country with as high a level of technical, cultural and political sophistication as East Germany, and as exposed to outside influences in the shape of West German television and millions of visitors, this authoritarian tutelage was harder and harder to maintain. The breaking point finally came when the Soviet reforms and the upheavals in Poland and Hungary raised popular expectations of change and shook the loyalties of the hitherto homogeneous party apparatus.

Krenz, in turn, represents anything but a break with the Honecker era. The youngest member of the Politburo, he was Honecker's chosen successor, and rumor has it that the old man was persuaded to resign only on condition that Krenz be selected to replace him. Krenz's nomination was greeted with dismay and suspicion. After all, this was the same man who had heaped praise on the Chinese leadership for its suppression of the democracy movement in Tiananmen Square. Some commentators even interpreted his election as a victory for hard-line reactionaries eager to get rid of an ailing and dithering Honecker. Yet only weeks later, the new leader has decisively swept away much of the legacy of the old regime by opening the borders, legalizing the opposition, freeing the media and announcing free elec-

Günter Minnerup is the editor of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe.

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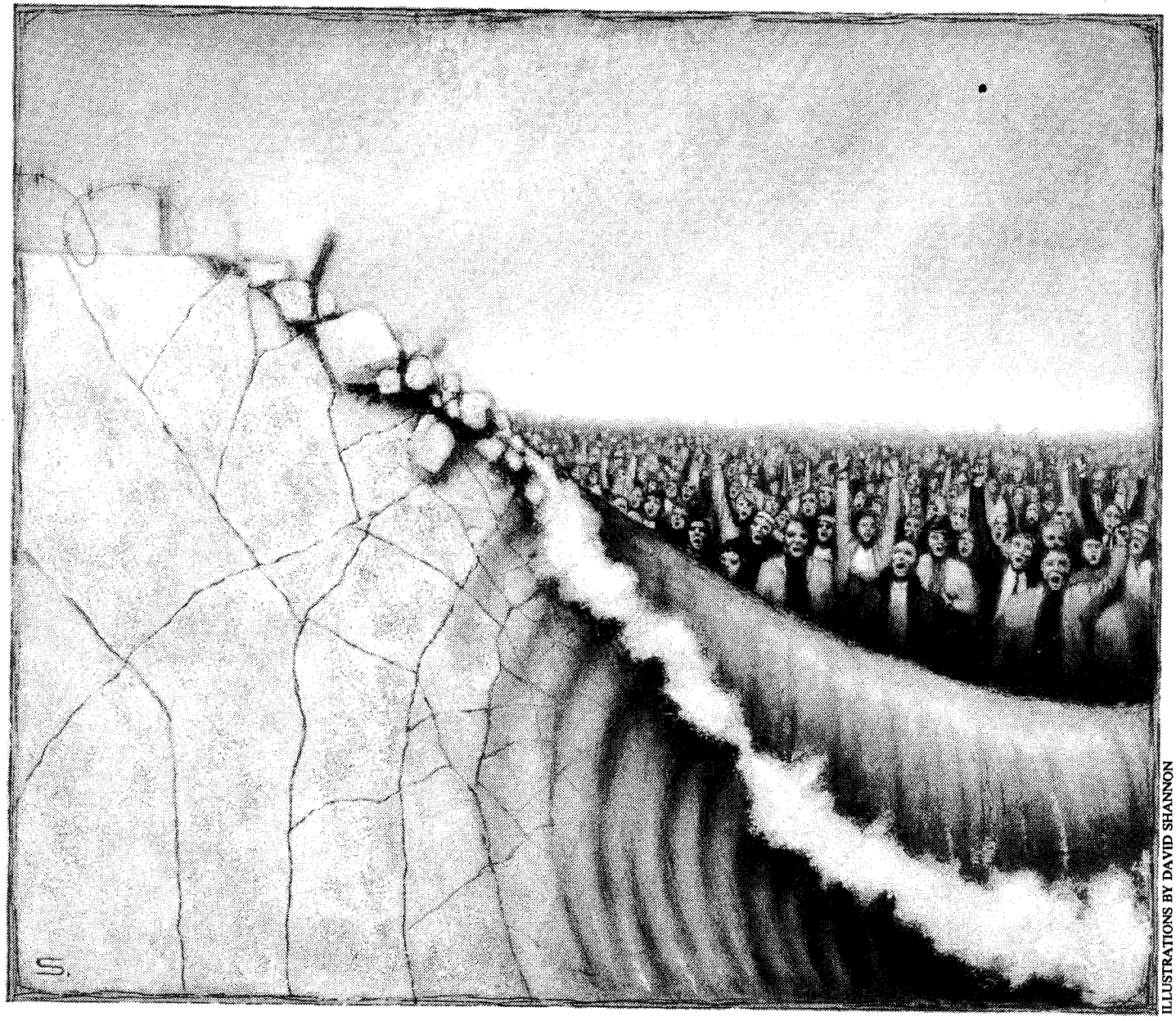
tions. There are only two rational explanations for this sudden about-face: the enormity of the pressures from below and the state of the ruling party.

The East German reform movement must rank as one of the most spectacular examples in history of a truly spontaneous revolution from below. Week after week, hundreds of thousands took to the streets in cities throughout the G.D.R.—often well over half the local populations. This is all the more impressive when one considers that there was no organized opposition to orchestrate the movement. The lively, nonconformist group of young activists centering around the Protestant churches was in no position to rally the masses against a heavily armed and efficient state. The Protestant Church itself, preaching to increasingly sparse and aging congregations, has none of the charismatic influence of Polish Catholicism.

Given these organizational deficiencies, such a spontaneous upsurge was possible only because the ruling party failed to check it. The S.E.D. has well over 2 million members in a population of 16 million, and most of the membership clearly took part in—or at least sympathized with—the reform rallies. Local functionaries quickly made their peace with the movement and passed the pressure on to the higher echelons of the party bureaucracy. The S.E.D. simply lacked the will to resist the reformist tide. After four decades of direct dependence on Moscow and the systematic education of its cadres in the spirit of the omnipresent slogan, "Learning from the Soviet Union means learning how to win!" Honecker's refusal to follow Gorbachev's new course had left the ranks of the party ideologically disoriented.

The S.E.D., furthermore, is not merely a collection of bureaucratic careerists; it is also, in however deformed a way, the repository of the strong socialist and communist traditions in the parts of the former German Reich that now constitute the G.D.R. It has not suffered the traumatic splits and purges of its Hungarian, Polish and Czechoslovak counterparts since the 1950s, and its considerable reform-communist potential has not so far been displayed. The full force of its reformism will be seen at the coming Party Congress, scheduled for December 15 to 17, where Krenz will



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have too much of a struggle on his hands to survive as leader even to contemplate reversing the concessions that have already been made.

This does not mean that we shall now see the S.E.D. reassert its leadership over East German society in a democratic fashion, as opposed to the bureaucratic-authoritarian techniques it has employed since the 1940s. But it does mean that the struggle over the future of the G.D.R. has much more of an internal dimension than Western commentators, hypnotized by the prospect of speedy German reunification, have been prepared to acknowledge. The long lines of day-trippers returning from the West Berlin shop windows to the reality of the G.D.R. will be the chief actors in that struggle. As far as they are concerned, the G.D.R. can never be the same again.

But what will it be like? One of the most striking aspects of the East German reform movement so far has been the virtual absence of any demand for a return to a capitalist market economy. From New Forum, the largest group with tens of thousands of supporters, to the newly founded Social Democratic Party, the entire opposition appears to accept the status quo of a socialized economy not only out of tactical circumspection but also out of genuine conviction. At issue is the way society, and hence the socialized economy, are run. The political monopoly of the S.E.D. must, and will, fall.

Speedy progress toward reunification is therefore not the only possible outcome of the present upheaval. To be sure, if the S.E.D. fails to live up to its current promises and attempts to claw back its concessions, or if it embarks on a ham-handed manipulation of the results of the pending elections, the inevitable backlash could quickly drive East Germany into the arms of the Federal Republic. That in itself would be enough to cause panic among the North Atlantic establishment, as the initial reaction to the breaching of the wall has amply shown. After all, much of the real purpose of the postwar edifice of NATO and Western European integration has been to maintain the division of Germany, not contain a largely nonexistent Communist threat. In the long run, a democratic and socialist East Germany would be far more destabilizing than a united capitalist Germany. Such a transformation would do even more to undermine the anti-Communist, pro-Atlanticist consensus in West Germany than the revolt against nuclear weapons and the popular sympathy for Gorbachev's program of *perestroika* have already done.

Either way, the long-term maintenance of the European status quo appears even less plausible now than it did before the political earthquake that struck Berlin in November. The dawn of the post-wall era marks the beginning of the end of the postwar settlement in Europe. □

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LIBERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Moving to the Next Stage

MARK GEVISSER

There was a time in the history of South Africa when the African National Congress was not banned and its leaders not imprisoned; when, as part of the living, breathing existence of the country, it set the quotidian calls to resistance and functioned not as mythology but as tangible leadership for the millions of blacks and smattering of whites seeking liberation. It was a time when people like Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu supplied the rhetoric of change within South Africa; when they fought the legal battles in court and led the demonstrations in Sophiatown and the marches to Pretoria; when they existed not as demons or gods but as leaders.

That time seems to have come again. Now the young people of Soweto, those on the front lines in 1976 and 1985, dance in the dusty streets around the feet of white-haired leaders who were imprisoned before the young comrades were born. Now the body of an exiled tribal chief, King Sabata of the Pondos, is brought home to the Transkei to be interred, and the homeland's puppet President allies himself with the A.N.C. at the funeral. Now, with the government's consent, 80,000 people gather at a rally to chant "Viva A.N.C.!" and listen to Walter Sisulu proclaim that "the A.N.C. has captured the center stage of political life in South Africa."

South Africa's newspapers are filled with images of celebration and statements by A.N.C. leaders. The unprintable is printed, the unthinkable is thought, and there is a sense, throughout the country, of being on the brink. There has been a de facto suspension of the state of emergency, and rumor has it Nelson Mandela will be home by Christmas. So much energy has been expended on the demands for these changes—both in South Africa and in the international community—that now that they are being met it is tempting to cry "victory" and dance with the octogenarians and comrades in the streets. The leaders are being freed and both sides have declared a willingness to negotiate a settlement.

Yes, we should dance, but carefully. Nelson Mandela might well celebrate this Christmas at a dinner table in Soweto, but the designs for the table at which all South Africans must sit and sort out their collective future have yet to be drawn. Walter Sisulu may be free, but his son Zwelakhe—who edits *The New Nation*—remains under severe restriction and the paper has just been threatened with a shutdown for repeatedly giving "positive publicity" to the A.N.C. Even though the release of Sisulu and seven others in mid-October does make tangible the prospects for resolution of

Mark Gevisser writes regularly on South Africa for The Nation.

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the crisis, the eight were released not as free agents but as commodities in an intricate game of approval mongering and time buying. South African President F.W. de Klerk is caught between the rock of internal resistance and the hard place of international condemnation.

Since replacing P.W. Botha in August, de Klerk has been cast by the world news media as a visionary, a savior, a Gorbachev, but the robes don't fit him. As leader of the National Party in the conservative Transvaal province, and as Minister of National (read "white") Education, he led the in-house resistance to Botha's cosmetic reforms over the past decade. De Klerk's political base is in the right-wing hinterland of the governing party, and if he has begun to consider the possibility of negotiation, it is because his primary motivation is the survival of his *volk*. The A.N.C. believes that the government is using the lure of negotiations to co-opt the liberation movement into the apartheid system, and there is no doubt that de Klerk's current quasi-*glasnost* is an attempt to test the strength of apartheid's adversaries and the forbearance of his own constituency before committing to real change. His party's current plan for South Africa's future would only entrench apartheid even further by extending the present tricameral Parliament into an unwieldy four-chambered monster, one chamber for each race. Any matter of national import would have to be ratified separately in all four chambers before being passed into law, thus giving the white chamber veto power. "If the government were under less pressure internally and externally," writes Mark Phillips of the University of the Witwatersrand, "negotiations could become just another in the long line of strategies which successive governments have pursued to defend the white minority state."

So if we are to dance it should be to keep up the pressure. If we are to dance it should not be because freedom is around the corner but because, for the time being, the tune is played and the rhythm set by the internal grass-roots resistance of the Mass Democratic Movement (M.D.M.) working in tandem with skillful diplomatic maneuvering orchestrated by the A.N.C. What is so fascinating about South Africa today is that even though the apartheid regime still has the biggest cannons, the liberation movement is, for the moment, calling the shots. As in East Germany, popular pressure is dictating public policy.

When, in one of his first acts, de Klerk permitted a protest march through the streets of Cape Town he was commended by the international news media for bravely "taking the initiative." He was doing nothing of the sort. The M.D.M.'s Defiance Campaign, gathering steam after the phenomenally successful detainees' hunger strike earlier this year [see Pippa Green, "New Wave of Defiance in South Africa," September 18], had reached such a pitch just after the September 6 elections—mainly in response to the killing of twenty-three people by the police on Election Day—that the march would have taken place anyway. Freedom-seeking South Africans would have walked willingly and non-violently into a rain of gunfire and there would have been thousands more to replace them. At a time when all eyes were on the new President, he had no choice.

For the first time in a decade, the U.S. government responded to antiapartheid voices. President Bush, after snubbing de Klerk, met in June with Albertina Sisulu (Walter Sisulu's wife) and a delegation from the banned United Democratic Front (U.D.F.). Herman Cohen, the new Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, publicly repudiated the Reagan policy of "constructive engagement," admitting that "sanctions have played a role in stimulating new thinking within the white power structure." He gave the de Klerk regime until next June to institute "real change" before calling for tougher measures. Until recently South Africa's $8 billion debt standstill agreement was slated to expire in June 1990, and the creditor banks were being pressured to refuse any further restructuring of debt payments unless signs of significant change were evident.

Indeed, F.W. de Klerk assumed control of South Africa with the support of only one international leader—the unflinching and unwavering British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. At the October Commonwealth Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Thatcher was expected to unveil a plan for South Africa similar to the one that led to Zimbabwe's Lancaster House Agreement a decade ago. Although the plan was never made public, it can be presumed that it would have protected Britain's extensive economic interests in the country and was intended to dovetail with de Klerk's goal of distancing the A.N.C. (for which Thatcher does not hide her distaste) from the negotiation process in favor of more conservative black voices. And as in Zimbabwe and Namibia, it is likely that the terms of negotiation would have been dictated not by the people of South Africa but by international brokers.

But if Thatcher was going to garner any international support for her plan—or even if she was simply going to call for more support for the government and fewer sanctions—she needed proof from de Klerk, with whom she had met at considerable length in June, that her version of constructive engagement was working. Little wonder, then, that in the week before the Commonwealth Conference was to convene de Klerk met for the first time with leaders of the resistance movement, and only four days before the first session in Kuala Lumpur, Sisulu and the others were set free. The hand of South Africa's international supporters was thus immediately strengthened, and that same week the South African government managed to strike a deal with the banks: The standstill agreement would be renewed in June 1990 if South Africa undertook to pay $1.5 billion of its debt over the course of three and a half years. The international financial community had, in effect, given apartheid an additional four years of breathing room.

Thatcher might well have conjured up a Lancaster House—or a Namibian Resolution 435—for South Africa, but for a brilliant piece of diplomatic maneuvering by the A.N.C.: Wary of Thatcher's moves and of de Klerk's growing international currency, and taking advantage of the extent to which the Defiance Campaign had shaken South Africa internally, the A.N.C. swiftly revived the guidelines for negotiation it first issued two years ago, presenting them

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in August to the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) summit in Harare, Zimbabwe. In these guidelines the A.N.C. reiterates the basic principles of the 1959 Freedom Charter, calling for "a united, democratic and non-racial state" organized on "the basis of universal suffrage, exercized through one person one vote on a common voters roll." It then sets out necessary conditions for a "climate conducive to negotiations": Before the A.N.C. will come to the table, the regime must release all political prisoners, lift all bans and restrictions, remove all troops from the townships, end the state of emergency and stop all political trials and executions. This being done, negotiations will ensue during a "mutually binding ceasefire" and, once a constitution has been settled, "all armed hostilities will be deemed to have formally terminated."

The O.A.U. promptly adopted the guidelines as its official South Africa policy, and shortly thereafter the Non-Aligned Movement followed suit. The guidelines will be brought before the United Nations at its special session on South Africa in December, and will almost certainly be adopted there too. This international consensus effectively pre-empted any possible Thatcher proposal that might minimize the role played by the liberation movement. Unlike the people of Namibia or Zimbabwe, South Africans are setting the terms for their freedom. The A.N.C.'s guidelines will soon be a universally accepted bottom line.

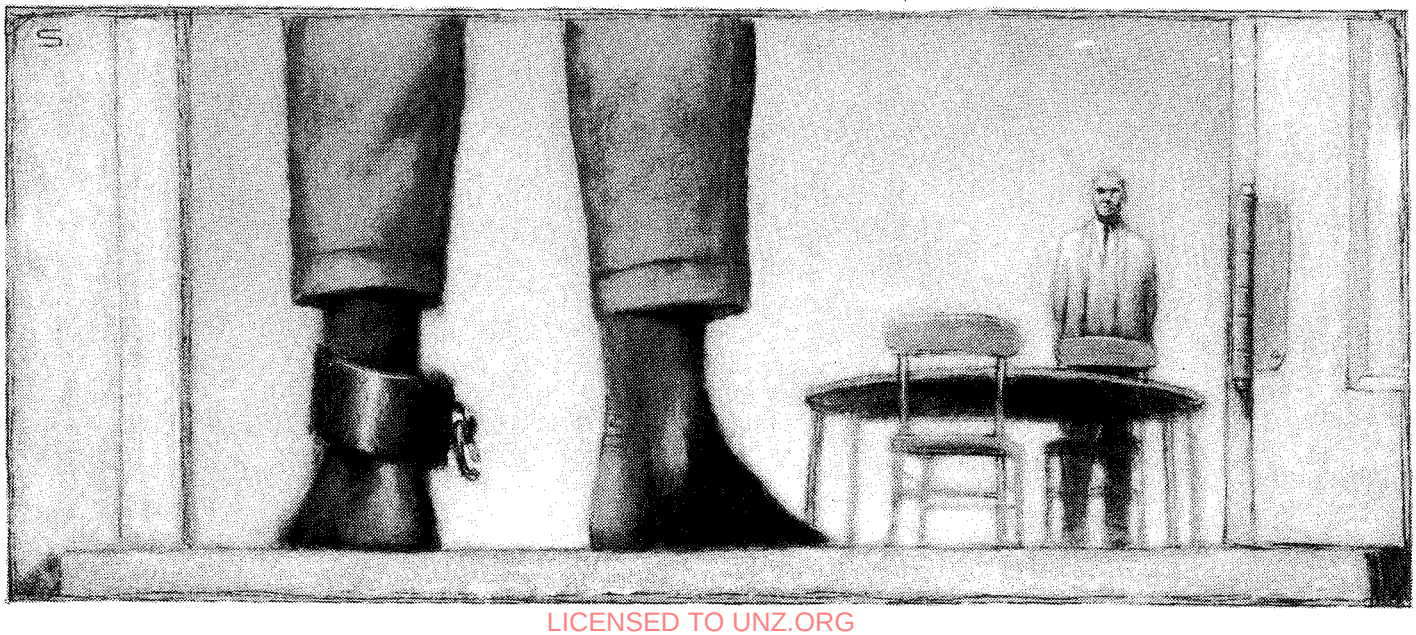
At the Commonwealth Conference, even Britain approved of the A.N.C.'s conditions for negotiation. However, hours after Foreign Secretary John Major put Britain's name to the Kuala Lumpur Agreement (the Commonwealth's watered-down version of the A.N.C. guidelines), Thatcher rescinded, refusing to commit Britain to the application of further sanctions as called for by the agreement. Amid the resultant furor one salient point emerged: Britain stands alone in the world in believing that the carrot, rather than the stick, will lure the South African regime to the negotiating table. Even the Bush Administration grudgingly acknowledges the utility of sanctions. In the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, it is a viewpoint so blinkered that it can be explained only by Britain's economic interests in the region.

The pressures of international retribution and internal resistance have forced de Klerk to travel a great distance in a very short time. With the release of prisoners, and with that of Mandela and hundreds of others pending, and the permission for marches and gatherings, the regime is well on its way to satisfying the A.N.C. conditions for negotiation. The A.N.C. in turn has undergone a major change of policy in presenting negotiations as the principal item on its agenda.

The concept of negotiation has been particularly problematic for those in the liberation movement who realize that black South Africans will come to any negotiating process from a compromised position, and will therefore be forced to accept something less than full freedom, as did the Zimbabweans at Lancaster House a decade ago. The A.N.C. has therefore refused to renounce armed struggle, and it swears to continue it, knowing that a capacity to destabilize is one of the most important bolstering factors at any negotiating table. The more the state is weakened by popular resistance, the more likely it will be to accept the terms of the liberation movement.

But at the A.N.C. rally in Soweto, Raymond Mhlaba, who was a key figure in the A.N.C.'s guerrilla army Umkhonto we Sizwe ("Spear of the Nation") before being imprisoned in 1963, admitted that the A.N.C.'s guerrilla efforts are "quite weak at this stage." The organization has come to see, after decades of repression culminating in the past four years' brutal emergency, that there will be no conclusive armed victory against the might of the apartheid regime. Consequently, there will be no solution in South Africa without the consent of the country's 5 million whites.

Perhaps critical in helping the Congress to understand this has been the stance of Moscow, still the liberation movement's most significant supporter. In his upcoming book, *The Mind of South Africa*, to be published by Alfred A. Knopf next April, South African journalist Allister Sparks quotes Boris Asoyan, deputy director of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's South Africa department, as saying that although "in the past it was always assumed there would be



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a classical overthrow of the white regime . . . now we accept there will have to be a political settlement." A recent paper prepared by senior Soviet Foreign Ministry official A.A. Makarov concludes that since "organizationally, politically and militarily the anti-racist resistance movement is not ready to topple the regime and capture power," talks should be the movement's main thrust. Even the South African Communist Party's General Secretary, Joe Slovo, a hardline Marxist-Leninist, acknowledged in a paper published in 1988 that the first step should be the sharing of power, and only then could the movement set about instituting socioeconomic revolution.

But the *Frontline Worker*, "a journal for the socialist movement in South Africa," roundly condemns both the A.N.C.'s constitutional guidelines and the Freedom Charter on which they are based as a "recipe for betrayal," and it casts the A.N.C. as a toady to "the bosses at home and abroad and the governments in the west (and the apartheid regime itself) [who] want to end apartheid without seeing an end to capitalism." Such critics maintain that the A.N.C. will have to repudiate socialism if it is to be at all acceptable to white South Africans and the West. They are being proved correct insofar as strong socialist voices within the A.N.C. (and there are many) have been notably quiet in the past few months, deferring to the unthreatening tones of leaders like Thabo Mbeki, the international director who is leading the negotiations drive and who is slated to be the organization's next head. Many are worried that the A.N.C.'s negotiation guidelines might serve as no more than a means for deracializing capitalism.

And so the A.N.C., like the de Klerk government, is caught between its own rock and hard place. On the one hand it must present itself as a viable and even attractive option for South African capital and the white South African electorate, but on the other it cannot afford to relinquish its claim to the moral high ground it has occupied for more than seventy-five years. In the stands at the A.N.C. rally outside Soweto, the hammer-and-sickle flags of the South African Communist Party far outnumbered the A.N.C.'s own black, green and gold, according to the *Weekly Mail*. Oliver Tambo's message, urging de Klerk to rise to the greatness of a peacemaker, was met with silence, while Joe Slovo's call to arms raised one of the loudest cheers of the rally. Such calls still speak to the soul of the revolution's foot soldiers, despite a higher-level understanding of the need for reconciliation.

So if negotiations take place there will be many questions to answer. Will the militant youth continue to dance at the feet of their once-imprisoned elders? How will those forces who refuse to participate in negotiations—like the Black Consciousness movement and the Pan-African Congress—be placated so that they do not undermine the process? And will very influential tribal leaders like Gatsha Buthelezi be included? Will the liberation movement be able to hold out for a common voters' list, or will it be co-opted into accepting de Klerk's "group rights" proposal? Will wealth be redistributed or will jobs just be reallocated according to some notion of "affirmative action"? And how will the fragile unity of the movement withstand a struggle over a new constitution? Raymond Suttner, a leader of the Mass Democratic Movement and a constitutional scholar, puts it best: "In preparing the ground for negotiations, we have no illusions about a quick fix, an easy solution. We are simply entering another site of struggle." □

ANTINUCLEAR SELLOUT

The Co-opting Of CASE

GEOFFREY ARONSON

Only fifty miles southwest of the Dallas–Fort Worth metropolis sits the Comanche Peak nuclear power station, waiting to go on-line after fifteen years of construction. One engineer who worked on the plant calls it a "completely unsafe nuclear facility with a great potential for killing or injuring millions of people." Despite such warnings, as well as a history of opposition by local citizens and stinging rebukes by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Texas Utilities (T.U.), Comanche Peak's owner, is moving to apply for a low-power operating license, the penultimate step before commercial operation.

Ironically, Comanche Peak was put on the fast track to operation by the very citizens' group that, over the past decade, was most responsible for uncovering its chronic safety and quality-control problems. In July 1988, in an unprecedented agreement, the Citizens' Association for Sound Energy (CASE) suddenly withdrew its opposition to the plant's license, triggering the dissolution of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, which was created by the N.R.C. in 1979 to monitor the plant's safety and design. In return, CASE was awarded a seat on a company-controlled oversight committee and a secret $10 million cash payment. For the nuclear industry, eager to defuse popular resistance to the next generation of power plants, Comanche Peak's ability to co-opt its opponents and short-circuit essential public oversight establishes an encouraging precedent. For opponents, the story of CASE should stand as a warning.

Juanita Ellis, a church secretary, formed CASE soon after Comanche Peak broke ground in the mid-1970s. In cooperation with a number of plant employees, CASE developed a critique of the plant's design and construction and took it before the licensing board. The campaign against Comanche Peak received its first dividend in 1983, when the board refused to approve an operating license for the plant. Instead it rebuked the N.R.C. staff for "acquiescing" in T.U.'s sloppy design and construction and ordered the utility to undertake reinspection and reconstruction of the entire project.

Geoffrey Aronson, a freelance writer living in Washington, D.C., specializes in nuclear issues.

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'Listen, my momma may have raised a mean child, but she raised no hypocrites.'

—Molly Ivins, The Progressive

Molly Ivins on George Bush:

"Deep down, George Bush is shallow."
The Progressive, March 1989.

"We do have some minimal standards for citizenship. Real Texans do not wear blue slacks with little green whales all over them. Real Texans do not refer to trouble as 'deep doo-doo.' George Bush has a hard time passing."
The Progressive, March 1988.

"Now George Bush the Younger is running for governor of Texas. We call him 'Shrub.' "
The Progressive, May 1989.

Molly Ivins on Ronald Reagan:

"It's such a fun Administration—half of it is under average and the other half is under indictment."
The Progressive, June 1988.

"If Reagan's IQ slips any lower, we'll have to water him twice a day."
The Progressive, January 1987.

Molly Ivins on Texas:

"The criterion for being considered an honest politician in Texas is as follows: If you can't take their money, drink their whiskey, screw their women, and vote against 'em anyway, you don't qualify."
The Progressive, June 1989.

"Things are so bad in Houston, the lawyers are walking around with their hands in their own pockets."
The Progressive, September 1986.

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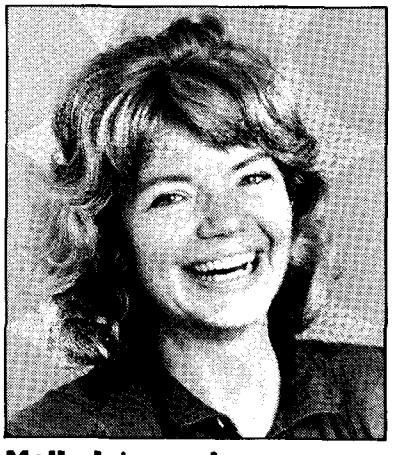

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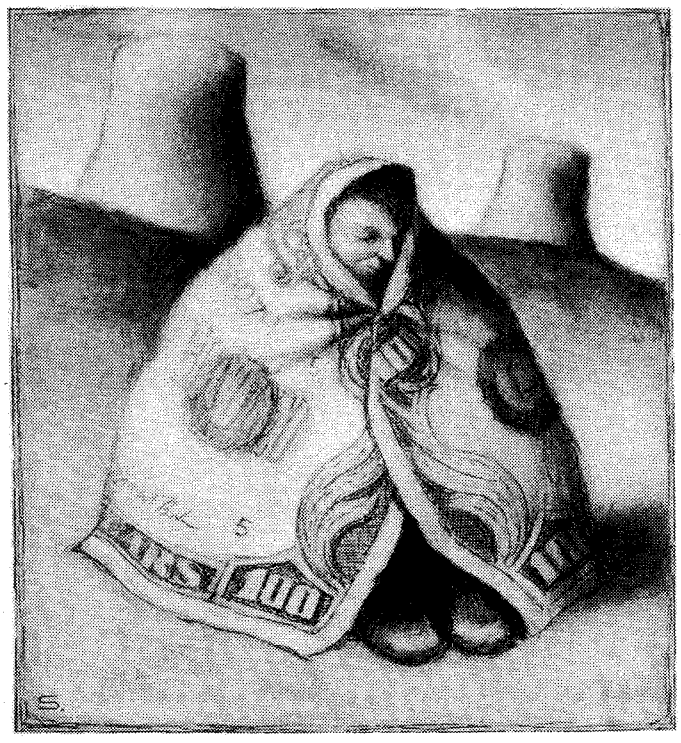
"The record before us," declared the licensing board, "casts doubt upon the design quality of Comanche Peak, both because applicant [T.U.] has failed to adopt a system to correct design deficiencies promptly and because our record is devoid of a satisfactory explanation for several design questions raised by intervenors." The board found that these allegations, based for the most part on testimony by two whistleblowers cooperating with CASE, "raise serious questions about the adequacy of the design of the remainder of the plant."

The licensing board's censure was a double whammy for T.U. The reinspection and reconstruction order meant huge additional costs for a project that was already monstrously over budget. Conceived when construction began as a $769 million venture, mismanagement and inflation had increased that figure more than tenfold, to almost $10 billion. Even more important than increased costs was the delay in the plant's licensing and operation, for not until the plant went on-line could T.U. begin to recoup its costs by petitioning the state's pro-business Public Utility Commission for an increase in rates paid by consumers.

Throughout the mid-1980s CASE maintained its assault on Comanche Peak. A September 1987 CASE newsletter asserted that "Comanche Peak was and is still unsafe and unable to be economically operated. . . . CASE does not believe that anyone can identify, much less correct, all of the many problems at Comanche Peak, and we therefore believe it should never receive an operating license." In April 1988, just a few months before the licensing board was to reconvene for an extensive review of the work it had ordered in 1983, CASE, in a letter to the board, noted that "very serious questions have been raised regarding such important matters as how [T.U.'s] reinspection program is being implemented, and who is in control at the Comanche Peak site." Even the usually deferential N.R.C. issued a report acknowledging that T.U. had lost critical documents and that its backlog of 20,000 problems awaiting correction was "unusually large."



Then, suddenly, Juanita Ellis had a change of heart.

That April, William Counsil, T.U.'s executive vice president in charge of nuclear engineering and operations, had put into motion a high-stakes strategy aimed at removing Ellis and CASE as public opponents, short-circuiting the licensing board review and speeding the plant's opening. "Mr. Counsil called me up and said that he'd like to meet with me," explained Ellis. "He wanted to show me a letter, but said that I first had to sign a confidentiality agreement." Ellis agreed to keep the letter secret "until and unless the licensing hearings were in fact dismissed."

The letter turned Ellis around. In it Counsil acknowledged her "unselfish contribution" and CASE's "untiring efforts" to make Comanche Peak a safer plant. He also admitted that Texas Utilities had misled the N.R.C. and acknowledged that "nuclear expertise did not exist to meet [N.R.C.] demands and that management did not have full sensitivity to the regulatory environment."

Counsil's letter could have provided powerful ammunition to opponents of Comanche Peak. "It must be obvious," Ellis later acknowledged in written testimony before Congress on May 4, "that no utility in its right mind would have publicly made admissions like that knowing that CASE would have turned right around and used it against them in the operating license hearings had we remained an intervenor." But at the time, T.U.'s *mea culpa* had an entirely different significance for Ellis. The company's secret letter, she said, "was an indication to us that . . . TU's attitude and mindset was changing, that there was hope at last that upper management . . . was beginning to get the message we'd been trying to send all those years."

From April through June 1988, CASE's executive board and T.U. engaged in confidential horse-trading. The utility wanted to muzzle CASE and rid itself of the delay and adverse publicity caused by the licensing board process. Ellis, physically exhausted after a decade of activism, wanted to assure CASE continued access to the plant after operations had begun and to reward a group of twelve whistleblowers, many of whom had suffered severe financial hardship as a consequence of their cooperation with CASE.

On June 30 in a public "Joint Stipulation," CASE, the sole intervenor, agreed to withdraw from the soon-to-be reconvened licensing hearings, thereby sealing the demise of the hearings as the only forum with oversight powers available to plant opponents. In return CASE was granted unprecedented access to the plant until 1993 and a seat on T.U.'s in-house Oversight Review Committee.

In addition to the public agreement, CASE, a nonprofit group, had simultaneously arrived at a secret $10 million settlement with T.U. A leak forced CASE and T.U. to divulge details of this settlement: $5.5 million of this cash payment was to go to the twelve whistleblowers, and $4.5 million was to be paid to CASE for expenses incurred in its long

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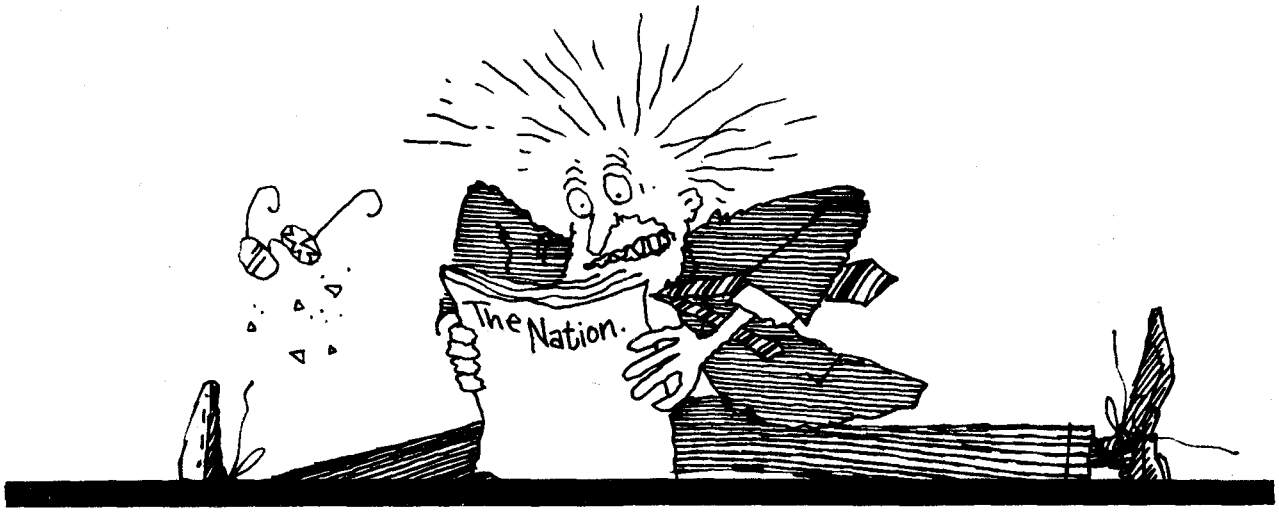

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battle against the utility as well as to pay for costs associated with CASE's monitoring of the plant under public agreement. This was an extraordinary sum. In the only previous settlement between intervenors and a utility, an Oregon citizens' group received a mere $15,000 from the Trojan Nuclear Power Plant. In the CASE agreement, however, payment was conditioned upon N.R.C. dismissal of the licensing board.

Few in Washington's public-interest community agreed with the two widely respected public-interest attorneys who had helped CASE negotiate the agreement: Tony Roisman, formerly of Trial Lawyers for Public Justice, and Billie Garde, an attorney for the Government Accountability Project. At a July 1988 meeting with Roisman that was attended by many antinuclear advocates, Ralph Nader expressed doubts about combining the potentially divergent interests of private parties, such as whistleblowers, with those representing the public interest of nuclear safety. Nader said that he was more concerned about the possibility of another Chernobyl at Comanche Peak than he was about compensating individual whistleblowers. Nader had even phoned Ellis in an unsuccessful effort to win her agreement for a delay in the board's imminent dissolution. But Roisman insisted that T.U. had satisfied CASE's safety and quality-control concerns; that the licensing board had outlived its usefulness and would in any event soon license the plant; and that Ellis now preferred to end the process of litigation in favor of "experts talking to experts."

Syed Hasan, a former T.U. engineer who was one of CASE's star whistleblowers, also tried to block the deal. Of all the whistleblowers set to benefit personally from CASE's agreement to dissolve the public licensing hearing, Hasan alone refused to accept T.U.'s offer as long as it was conditioned upon his agreement not to testify before the licensing board. He was supposed to receive $200,000 from the settlement, but because of his activities he is still waiting for his check. In July Hasan, writing under the pseudonym John Doe, pleaded with the licensing board to call him as a witness "in order to forestall disaster."

"It is my duty as an engineer and citizen of this country," wrote Hasan, "to do everything in my power to force the NRC to properly and completely investigate the life-threatening safety flaws I witnessed while employed at the Comanche Peak site." Hasan's petition fell on deaf ears. CASE, the N.R.C. and T.U. were bent on eliminating the board and there was no stopping them. The licensing board was dissolved on July 13, 1988. Hasan has gone to court to force T.U. to make good on its $200,000 offer.

Antinuclear activists in Texas were shocked by the Comanche Peak settlement. They do not share Ellis's trust in T.U.'s belated concern for safety. Nor do they see the wisdom in her decision to trade CASE's role as an aggressive, confrontational public interest-oriented outsider for a seat at the utility's table.

Betty Brink, a freelance journalist who writes about environmental and political issues, is the president of Citizens for Fair Utility Regulation (CFUR), an antinuclear group that pulled out of the licensing hearings in the early 1980s for lack of funds. "Up until she withdrew from the process," notes Brink, "Juanita Ellis was telling me and putting out newsletters saying the plant could not be built safely. Without someone saying the emperor is naked, we're going to get a plant down there. It's very dangerous. And unless we get the licensing hearings reopened there is no way for us to know about the critical issues left hanging when [CASE] settled."

CFUR has taken the N.R.C. to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit to force the reopening of the aborted

Silence Is Golden

Although the agreement at Comanche Peak represents an extraordinary buyout of public opposition to nuclear power, the heretofore secret corporate practice of "restrictive settlements"—paying off nuclear whistleblowers to prevent their testimony before government officials—is much more common.

A confidential May 1989 report titled "Secret 'Money-for-Silence' Agreements in the Nuclear Industry," written by the staff of Senator John Breaux's Subcommittee on Nuclear Regulation, noted that "we now have evidence that [restrictive settlements] may be widespread throughout the nuclear industry." The report questioned whether, as a result of such agreements, vital safety information has been withheld from the N.R.C. "Plants may be operating that were licensed by a blindfolded agency," it continued. "Even more troublesome is that plants may be operating under management that has intentionally obstructed the providing of information to federal regulatory agencies."

"If management hadn't suppressed safety information from Morton-Thiokol's engineers," the report concluded, "the Challenger disaster could have been avoided. It is frightening to think that we may be dealing with multiple nuclear equivalents of the Challenger disaster."

The N.R.C., in response to pressure exerted by the subcommittee, has forced the nuclear industry to make public fourteen restrictive settlement agreements reached between nuclear contractors and whistleblowers. Agreements have been pried loose covering the South Texas Plant, Catawba in South Carolina and Nebraska's Fort Calhoun.

There were two such secret agreements at Comanche Peak. In one, Joe Macktal, a journeyman electrician, received $35,000 as part of a settlement that unlawfully prohibited his voluntary participation before public licensing bodies. The Faustian bargain of money for silence in the Macktal case has raised questions of bribery, obstruction of justice and witness tampering at both the N.R.C.'s Office of Investigations and the Justice Department's General Litigation Division. G.A.

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licensing hearings in order to win a delay in the granting of a low-power operating license to T.U. The organization is asking Texas Senator Lloyd Bentsen for a full-scale investigation of the plant before it goes on-line. In late October the N.R.C. itself received information from an anonymous source alleging that N.R.C. officials had falsified data provided by their own inspectors at the Comanche Peak plant—data that raise additional questions about the plant's readiness to receive a low-power operating license. The N.R.C.'s Office of Investigations and its inspector general are looking into these cover-up allegations, which may further delay approval of a license.

Despite CASE's presence on site, nothing seems to have changed at Comanche Peak. The N.R.C., in a July 10, 1989, report detailing the failure of a critical test two months earlier, warned that the utility lacks a "management philosophy normally associated with safe reactor plant operation."

Today CASE is isolated from the very public whose interests it is supposed to represent. The once-vibrant grassroots group now has only six members and prefers to resolve its differences with T.U. in private. And most of its share of the multimillion-dollar cash settlement is still sitting in the bank while CASE decides how to spend it. Together with a rump faction of the CASE board, individual members of CFUR have petitioned for a court order to require Ellis to open CASE's financial records. Community interest organizations that were once united are now forced to expend valuable energy fighting one another.

Worse yet, in the wake of its agreement, CASE seems unlikely to contest T.U.'s expected request for a rate increase before the Texas Public Utilities Commission. Forced to play catch-up, Comanche Peak's other opponents would then have a much more difficult, if not impossible, task proving that the public should not be forced to pay for billions of dollars of cost overruns at the plant.

Ellis, however, insists that a decision to fight T.U. before the utilities commission has not been made. "A lot depends upon when [T.U.] files a rate case," she says. "If we are just buried, swamped [with paperwork]," says Ellis, CASE may prefer instead to stick to its primary role as an observer.

"The nuclear industry sees this agreement as a model," explains Nina Bell, an attorney long active in the antinuclear movement. And indeed, in a letter to N.R.C. chair Lando Zech Jr. opposing efforts to re-establish the licensing board, the Nuclear Management and Resources Council, lobbyists for the commercial nuclear industry, praised the Comanche Peak settlement as a "significant milestone . . . with important implications to all licensed facilities" and "a sound program for resolving technical issues, thereby eliminating the need for recourse to the adjudicatory process."

"We have more confidence that the N.R.C. will follow through with similar agreements on operating plants," says Tom Price, the resource council's director of industry and government relations. Price mentions the Surrey plant in Virginia, where a solution to the problem of on-site storage of fuel may require an amendment to the plant's operating license. "Normally [such an amendment] is approved by the N.R.C.," he explains. "Should intervenors try to question the soundness of their decision, then dispute resolution like that at Comanche Peak might be appropriate." Price also suggests that the Comanche Peak precedent will prove useful when many other plants, such as Yankee Rowe in western Massachusetts, apply for a license to operate beyond their approved forty-year life span. □

Bottle Battle

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

ends most mothers are more likely to switch to proprietary infant formula than to whole cow's milk, to the benefit of the manufacturer's bottom line.

Breast-feeding, as compared with the use of infant formula, has many documented advantages, among them a reduced incidence of both respiratory and gastrointestinal infections during the breast-feeding period, a reduced incidence of ear infections for the first seven years of life, a reduced incidence of allergic disorders and a small but significant increase in intelligence quotient measured at 7 and 15 years of age.

Unfortunately, as Rima Apple points out in her book, *Mothers and Medicine: A Social History of Infant Feeding 1890-1950*, during the first half of this century the scientific orientation of medical education meant that physicians learned more about "scientific" infant feeding—that is, bottle-feeding—than breast-feeding. Lack of knowledge about lactation made doctors indifferent to, and often uncomfortable with, mothers who breast-fed. Many physicians also made the assumption that artificial feeding was as healthy as breast-feeding. This attitude often discouraged mothers from breast-feeding, so that by the late 1960s less than 20 percent of mothers initially breast-fed and less than 10 percent of all mothers continued breast-feeding into the sixth month of their baby's life. Vigorous promotion of infant formulas by manufacturers worked to assure this result.

Then, starting in the early 1970s, there was a "greening of nutrition" that prompted a gradual increase in the number of mothers electing to breast-feed. The product, human milk, was of course no different from what it always had been. After a decade the incidence of breast-feeding increased to its present level, where it has remained for the past ten years. This increase in breast-feeding was enthusiastically supported by the formula manufacturers once they recognized that millions of breast-fed babies could soon be converted to formula guzzlers.

To that end, the formula manufacturers spend millions of dollars a year courting pediatricians with lavish parties at their conventions and "educating" them with an endless stream of pamphlets and promotional brochures. In addi-

Frank A. Oski is chair of the department of pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. He is the editor of Principles and Practice of Pediatrics, *published in October by Lippincott.*

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tion, the companies provide hospitals with free formulas and "starter" or "discharge" packs for new mothers who, they hope, will choose not to breast-feed for long, if at all. The American Academy of Pediatrics (A.A.P.) and thousands of individual pediatricians have lived for years in symbiosis with the three major formula manufacturers: Ross Laboratories, a subsidiary of Abbott Laboratories; the Mead Johnson Co., owned by Bristol-Myers; and Wyeth Laboratories, part of Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories, which is in turn owned by the American Home Products conglomerate.

This clubby arrangement was shattered last year when Carnation introduced Good Start H.A., a formula it labeled as hypoallergenic (hence the "H.A.") and advertised directly to the public. Carnation, which is owned by the international megacorporation Nestlé S.A., claimed the formula would prevent or reduce fussiness, colic, sleeplessness and rashes.

The A.A.P. has long opposed advertising infant formula directly to the public and immediately called on Carnation to cease. Then the U.S. Food and Drug Administration rejected the "H.A." label, saying that the data submitted by Carnation did not adequately support the company's claims concerning the formula's effectiveness. Within days the company agreed to stop labeling and advertising Good Start as hypoallergenic, especially since several reports indicated babies had developed "shock-like" reactions to the product.

This past June 30, Carnation signed an out-of-court agreement with nine state attorneys general who had found that the company had engaged in "deceptive and unfair" advertising in violation of each state's consumer protection law. Carnation also agreed to pay $90,000 to cover the costs of the investigation, which had been initiated by California, New York and Texas. But the company admitted no wrongdoing.

Indeed, Carnation appears undaunted by the whole experience. Good Start, now relabeled, is still marketed to the public, as is Carnation's Good Nature. Good Nature is intended for infants 6 months of age and older who have already had solid foods introduced into their diets. The advantages of such a product have not been established, but Carnation is pushing it hard, despite objections by the A.A.P.

Apparently encouraged by the quick success of Carnation—reportedly Good Start captured 4 percent of the market before encountering legal problems—Bristol-Myers, the parent of Mead Johnson, has entered into an agreement with Gerber to produce Gerber Baby Formula and market it directly to the public. In addition to TV commercials and print ads, discount coupons have begun appearing in newspaper supplements. This Gerber product has no special features that make it any better than the formulas already available and, in fact, it is a product that had been abandoned by Mead Johnson when the company improved its own Enfamil formula.

At the A.A.P.'s annual meeting in Chicago in October, the organization reaffirmed its policy against direct advertising of infant formula to the public, citing the adverse effect it has on breast-feeding. "Whether or not a mother chooses to breast-feed," said Donald Schiff, then president of the A.A.P., "should not be influenced by expensive advertising campaigns waged by competing formula makers."

The A.A.P. has instituted a new policy rejecting any contributions from formula manufacturers that market their products directly to the public, including nearly $760,000 already pledged by Mead Johnson and Gerber. This money would have gone to support various meetings, luncheons, awards and other programs that will now be financed from other funds. Some pediatricians and hospitals are protesting the direct advertising by also boycotting Gerber and Mead Johnson products. However, the A.A.P. cannot legally endorse such boycotts, nor may the organization stop companies that advertise directly to the public from advertising in A.A.P. member publications and exhibiting their products during A.A.P. meetings.

Some critics view the A.A.P. opposition to direct advertising as self-serving, an attempt by pediatricians to keep unreasonable control over their patients and limit their choices. But doctors counter that infant nutrition is far too important to be left to seductive advertising claims. Most also feel that direct advertising erodes the parent-physician relationship: one less matter to discuss with the pediatrician, perhaps one less reason even to see the doctor.

Both Carnation and Gerber defend themselves by stating that they acknowledge in their advertising that breast milk is best. And they do. But how long will such endorsements last when the fight for market shares really begins to heat up? More important, who is paying to promote the unique nutritional benefits of human milk? Despite the seemingly magical properties of breast milk, these are likely to go unnoticed in the midst of an advertising blitz encouraging mothers to start formula feeding as soon as possible.

Perhaps prescriptions should be required for the dispensing of infant formula. All formulas could be regarded as drugs by the F.D.A., and their contents and the manufacturers' claims could be carefully monitored. Requiring prescriptions for formulas would spur pediatricians to learn more about them and, more important, would stimulate the companies to improve their products. There have been very few scientific advances in formula content in the past decade. In Papua New Guinea the sale of infant formula requires a prescription. This rule, which went into effect thirteen years ago, has resulted in a major increase in the incidence of breast-feeding and a marked improvement in the health of infants.

But the infant formula lobby is unlikely to take its cue from Papua New Guinea, despite the facts. In a Western Union Mailgram sent last June to thousands of pediatricians, Ross Laboratories president Dick Gast criticized his competitors for hawking to the public. But he also asked, "Are we, Ross Laboratories, following an outmoded, 'tilting at windmills' philosophy by not joining the fray and abandoning the doctor for the 30-second TV spot?" The threat is clear. If Ross Laboratories and Wyeth-Ayerst market shares begin to slip away to Carnation and Gerber, they will not be content simply to cry over spilt profits, and we can soon expect TV battles between diapered advocates of "tastes great" versus "less filling." □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Disenchantment & Democracy

GEORGE SCIALABBA

CONTINGENCY, IRONY, AND SOLIDARITY. *By Richard Rorty. Cambridge University Press. 224 pp. $34.50. Paper $10.95.*

"There is no God," James Mill confided to his son, "but this is a family secret." The utility of religion is a commonplace of Western discourse from Protagoras to *Habits of the Heart*. Educated unbelievers, however unenthusiastic about contemporary political and economic arrangements, have nevertheless worried that widespread unbelief would make social cohesion impossible. In the capitalist democracies of the late twentieth century, unbelief is widespread; and though the bourgeois virtues may be less in evidence, anomie does not yet loom. But this may be in part because of the currency within these societies of secular substitutes for religion, especially the metaphysics of "human nature," "natural rights" and "objectivity." As long as *something* absolute, something transcendent, is believed to validate a society's institutions, the necessary minimum of solidarity and self-discipline may be expected from its members.

Locke, Rousseau and Kant—the church fathers of the Enlightenment—bequeathed us the philosophical doctrines that have come to underwrite liberalism: inviolable rights, moral autonomy and responsibility, the uniqueness and ineffability of each personality. All these doctrines rest on the traditional epistemology of "objective truth." Throughout two millenniums of classical philosophy, truth meant correspondence to something "out there," to the essential nature of reality, conceived variously as the mind of God, the Platonic Ideas, rational substances and the realm of things-in-themselves. Likewise, justice meant treating human beings according to their essential nature, which, by definition, could not vary between cultures or epochs. Then came science, capitalism and the French Revolution, and along with them philosophical modernity. "About two hundred years ago," Richard Rorty writes in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, "the idea that truth was made rather than found began to take hold of the imagination of Europe."

This idea—that "where there are no sentences there is no truth, that sentences are elements of human languages, and that human languages are human creations," as Rorty puts it—implies that individual and social moralities are human creations, not derived from our human essence or the nature of things. For there *is* no human essence, no nature of things. There are only alternative scientific and moral vocabularies, better or worse suited to our diverse purposes. And these purposes are themselves contingent, dependent on our socialization and our community's history.

The most compelling and influential account of morality yet produced is Nietzsche's. Rightly perceiving that the purpose of most moralities heretofore has been to suppress the self-assertion of exceptional individuals, Nietzsche concluded that every form of social solidarity is a mystification based on envy. In particular, democracy is merely the attempt of the masses—the "last men"—to secure their welfare by legislating universal mediocrity. Less explicitly, Nietzsche's successors—Shaw, Lawrence, Heidegger, Foucault, Adorno and many others—have also assumed an opposition, at the level of individual psychology if not of social policy, between equality, compassion and other liberal virtues, on the one hand, and, on the other, the disenchantment and self-cultivation of the gifted few.

Not many writers have tried to do justice to the claims of both disenchantment and democracy, both irony and solidarity, and none so successfully as Richard Rorty. One of his two previous books, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, interpreted the history of philosophy as an increasingly thorough emancipation from metaphysical illusions, culminating in the utterly different but equally decisive critiques of Dewey, Wittgenstein and Heidegger. *Consequences of Pragmatism*, an essay collection, filled in details of this idiosyncratic narrative and speculated about the "post-philosophical" future. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, another collection, is also about the consequences of pragmatism: not, this time, for philosophy and the other academic disciplines but for the soul of the pragmatist.

It is no longer possible to believe confidently, with Plato and the Christian or Enlightenment philosopher, that a proper conception of justice will fuse the public and the private, that individual perfection and the common good must coincide. Instead we have to ask anxiously whether they may even—as a practical matter; as live, motivating concerns within a single person—coexist. "We would like," Rorty writes, "to be able to admire both Blake and Arnold, both Nietzsche and Mill, both Marx and Baudelaire, both Trotsky and Eliot, both Nabokov and Orwell." We would like, that is, to be both detached and committed, autonomous and connected, fastidious and fervent, subtle and savagely indignant. No theory, no philosophical formula, will enable us to strike an ideal balance. No theory can resolve this dilemma; Rorty offers only to describe it. But that's a help.

Rorty's description ingeniously plays off exemplary "public" and "private," political and antipolitical, writers: Nietzsche against Proust, Habermas against Foucault, Nabokov's scorn for "topical trash" in literature against his horror of cruelty, and the first two-thirds of *1984* against the last third. Rorty explicates Nietzsche's ("to become who one actually is") and Proust's ("the discovery of our true life") famous mottos, which name a similar project: "Both men wanted to create themselves by writing a narrative of the people who had offered descriptions of them; they wanted to become autonomous by redescribing the sources of heteronomous descriptions." But Proust accepted more fully the contingency of those previous, inherited descriptions and the consequent incompleteness of his own narrative. Nietzsche, in his ambiguous exposition of the will to power, sometimes "claims to see deeper rather than differently" and thus "betrays his own perspectivism and his own nominalism." These occasional lapses from irony are the source of Nietzsche's adventitious antiliberalism. Of the two most original contemporary philosophers, Habermas is "a liberal" (Rorty borrows Judith Shklar's definition of liberals, those for whom "cruelty is the worst thing they do"; but his usage throughout embraces social democrats and even libertarian socialists)

George Scialabba writes frequently on politics and philosophy.

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"who is unwilling to be an ironist" (someone who has come to terms with the contingency of all philosophical vocabularies and political ideas); Foucault is "an ironist who is unwilling to be a liberal." Habermas insists on "grounding" his admirable politics on a new epistemology, the theory of "communicative reason," which will allegedly escape the fate of all previous epistemologies, and about which Rorty is, here and elsewhere, persuasively skeptical. Foucault demonstrates brilliantly that "the patterns of acculturation characteristic of liberal societies have imposed on their members kinds of constraints of which older, premodern societies had not dreamed." But he fails to see—or refuses to acknowledge—that liberal societies have also evolved humane values and institutions roughly equal in strength and flexibility to the manipulative discourses he expertly analyzes.

The chapters on Nabokov and Orwell in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* are superb. Chief among the consequences of pragmatism is that philosophy makes nothing happen: It is politically useless. No political order, including liberalism, can be theoretically grounded. Progress depends rather on extending our—"we" being the politically competent citizens of the rich democracies—imaginative range, identifying with those who are unnecessarily suffering. And this is a task not for philosophers but for social scientists, journalists and, above all, novelists. Nabokov and Orwell were, temperamentally, poles apart. But both of them, according to Rorty, "warn the liberal ironist intellectual against temptations to be cruel"; both of them "dramatize the tension between private irony and liberal hope."

Nabokov notoriously despised the "sociological side" of literature and was scathing about writers who aspired to be "teachers" and "reformers" rather than "enchanters." But as Rorty shows, Nabokov's aesthetic pronouncements are irrelevant; his "best novels are the ones which exhibit his inability to believe his own general ideas." Although Nabokov asserted the moral sufficiency of pure art, *Lolita* and *Pale Fire* are actually "reflections on the possibility that there can be sensitive killers, cruel aesthetes, pitiless poets—masters of imagery who are content to turn the lives of others into images on a screen, while simply not noticing that these other people are suffering." For all his mockery, Nabokov understood that "the pursuit of autonomy is at odds with feelings of solidarity," and that this antithesis might, at times, yield a moral problem. Without the liberal virtues, the ironic intelligence may turn inhuman.

Nabokov's Humbert and Kinbote are apolitical genius-monsters. O'Brien in *1984* is a political genius-monster; he lacks the liberal virtues not because he is indifferent to other people—he is anything but that—but because in his society solidarity is no longer possible. Many critics have not seen the point of Orwell's extended portrait, supposing it a specimen of his unfortunate "mysticism of cruelty." But in this case, the mysticism is all on his critics' side: the assumption that an atemporal, noncontingent human nature endows us with at least some measure of inner freedom and rationality and will prevent the permanent disappearance of liberal institutions. O'Brien is plausible—not because sadism or power hunger is innate but because nothing is innate. O'Brien illustrates the truth to which the failure of classical philosophy points: Socialization goes all the way down.

Orwell offered no consistent program, and certainly no theoretically based pro-

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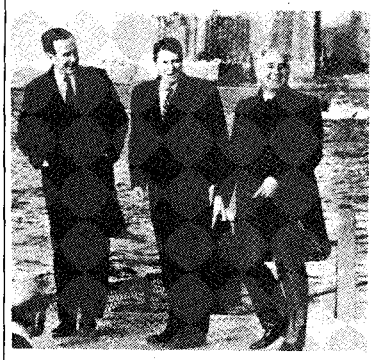

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gram, for avoiding the extinction of freedom. What he offered instead was a sometimes infuriatingly vague advocacy of "decency" and, far more important, a terrifyingly explicit depiction of where the lack of such solidarity had led and might yet lead. Both as a journalist and a novelist, Orwell worked on his readers' moral imagination, showing them suffering they had failed to notice and then showing them what the best, the most intelligent, of them would turn into if this moral obtuseness overwhelmed the fragile culture of liberalism. Rorty believes with Shelley, an earlier radical pragmatist, that "the great instrument of moral good is the imagination" (*A Defence of Poetry*); or, in his own formulation, that "detailed descriptions of particular varieties of pain and humiliation (in, e.g., novels or ethnographies), rather than philosophical or religious treatises, are the modern intellectual's principal contribution to moral progress." So Orwell is, for him, a paradigmatic example of the responsible intellectual.

But Rorty respects the prerogatives of irresponsible intellectuals. Nietzsche, Proust, Heidegger and Derrida should obviously be encouraged to pursue their idiosyncratic projects of self-creation. How can a democratic society avoid either alienating or privileging its spiritual elite?

> One can ask these men to *privatize* their projects, their attempts at sublimity—to view them as irrelevant to politics and therefore compatible with the sense of human solidarity which the development of democratic institutions has facilitated. This request for privatization amounts to the request that they resolve an impending dilemma by subordinating sublimity to the desire to avoid cruelty and pain.

Such a request will be based not on a theory of justice but on

> nothing more profound than the historical facts which suggest that without the protection of something like the institutions of bourgeois liberal society, people will be less able to work out their private salvations, create their private self-images, reweave their webs of belief and desire in the light of whatever new people and books they happen to encounter. In . . . an ideal society, discussion of public affairs will revolve around 1) how to balance the needs for peace, wealth, and freedom when conditions require that one of these goals be sacrificed to one of the others and 2) how to equalize opportunities for self-creation and then leave

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people alone to use, or neglect, their opportunitities.

Rorty would be the first to acknowledge that these prescriptions are little more than banalities. They are, however, the best that philosophy can do. Rorty's accomplishment has been to help liberate us from the illusion that things are otherwise, that we can turn away from terrestrial pain toward political truths inscribed in the heavens or in our inmost nature. The tradition of all the dead generations of philosophers weighs a little less on those who have read Rorty's books, which free us to become who we actually are and to turn toward those who need a more than philosophical liberation. □

What Really Happened

BRINA CAPLAN

A NATURAL CURIOSITY. *By Margaret Drabble. Viking. 309 pp. $19.95.*

It used to be that Margaret Drabble treated her audience with the same deferential consideration Victorian novelists showed their Dear Readers. But in *A Natural Curiosity*, her ninth novel, she doesn't mind saying outright that readers get on her nerves. When she feels them pressuring her for plot resolution or consistent characterization, she starts hurling whatever's handy. "I wonder," she growls at one point, "if those of you who object to the turn that Shirley's life has taken are the same as those who objected to its monotony in the first place. If you are, you might reflect that it might be your task, not mine or hers, to offer her a satisfactory resolution." And no more out of *you*, Dear Reader, unless you want a typewriter upside your head.

Besides authorial snarling, interruptions include moments of muttering, self-referential jokes, a little essay on Arnold Bennett's virtues as a novelist, and tossed-off asides. *A Natural Curiosity* is not, moody Maggie warns, "a political novel. . . . No, not a political novel. More a pathological novel, a psychotic novel"; then, pulling herself together, "Sorry about that. It won't happen again. Sorry." Even so, between fits she continues to provide the kind of tidy novel we've come to expect from her: witty dialogue, a tightly webbed plot, men and women whose concerns are contemporary but who have the feel of characters drawn from old-time British fiction. Drabble's last novel, *The Radiant Way*, dealt with life choices made by three bright, ambitious women who met in the 1950s as Cambridge undergraduates. In that book, the character for whom you are now responsible, Shirley, was seen only briefly, sharing a bleak, deadening working-class childhood with her sister, Liz. Unlike her aspiring sister, Shirley made an escape through sexy adolescence and early marriage. As a middle-aged woman, though, she finds herself in *A Natural Curiosity* responsible for a half-mad mother, two beefy sons and a closemouthed, resentful daughter. Eventually, the children go off, the mother dies, the husband commits suicide (yet another victim of Thatcherite economics) and Shirley, free again to choose, impulsively runs away to Paris.

By contrast, her sister, Liz, enjoys the luxury of speculation. "I want to know *what really happened*," she tells a friend, "at the beginning. When human nature began. . . . And I know I'll never know. But I can't stop looking." A fashionable London psychiatrist with grown children and a divorced second husband on the threshold of return, Liz must decide whether she can bear to probe the family mystery her bizarre, agoraphobic mother had concealed—the identity and fate of her own (and Shirley's) biological father.

Liz's best friend, Alix, is also trying to puzzle out a mystery. When she and her husband both lose their jobs to education budget cuts (she taught in a women's reformatory), they must leave London for a depressed industrial town in Yorkshire. There Alix takes to visiting a nearby maximum security prison and an utterly isolated inmate whom she calls her "murderer." She wants to know what made Paul Whitmore kill, then ritualistically decapitate, a series of women, including one of her former students. Is Paul an aberration, a historical product or simply evil? "He is like a theorem," explains the anonymous narrator at the beginning of the novel, smoothly entering Alix's stream of thought:

> When she has measured him, she will know the answer to herself and to the whole matter. The Nature of Man. Orig-

Brina Caplan is a writer and psychologist who lives in Boston.

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inal Sin. Evil and Good. It is all to be studied, there, in captive P. Whitmore.

This novel is also crowded with secondary characters: a solicitor–land developer dreaming of grass-girded industrial parks (Astroturf will do), an ancient poet with a recently resurrected reputation, adulterous suburbanites, media mavens, a beleaguered socialist politician and, of course, the painfully growing or already grown-up children of the questing women. Like a Victorian novelist, Drabble loves to pack the stage. Nineteen eighty-seven in England, the narrator warns us early on, "will be a psychotic year, the year of abnormality, of Abuse, of the Condom." The commonweal is also in some respects a character.

How seriously does Drabble take the emotional devices and physical violence she identifies as typifying the England of 1987? Sometimes she seems urgent. At one point, the narrator sits Alix down in front of a TV set in order to make vivid nine newsworthy acts of cruelty – from a murder committed by friends as a joke to a skinhead's torturing of a homeless person for cash. "Spot the one invented story, if you can," she proposes dourly. "No prize offered."

This is an attention-getting moment. But it rapidly comes to seem just another instance of grouching, its effect dissipated when the narrator speeds on to other matters. Drabble never commits her narrator to a slow, sinking down through the surface of a character's consciousness. Missing is the step-by-step constriction of available choice that in, say, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* makes sense of the violent rape of a child by her father. Missing is the evolving capacity for violence that convinces us a Dickens or Dostoyevsky murderer is always more human than not. Because Drabble seeks out levels of observation that put characters at a far distance, they diminish in importance, and their scurryings and activities seem grotesque. Violence remains something far off, referred to or talked about. Alix and Liz speculate about cruelty in the ancient world or recall the death exacted from the Roman poet Lucan. Even Paul the murderer, it turns out, has a scholarly interest in those British tribes that mixed a bit of decapitation with their religion.

Consequently, the novel fails whenever it is time to explain why a character has acted violently. From the distance Drabble maintains, such an act seems random rather than characteristic or, as it might appear from the perpetrator's perspective, inevitable. Paul's compulsions are not *felt* to result from his mother's insane cruelty; they are merely ascribed to this cause. When Drabble shows us his macabre, dog-torturing mother, the suspense rivals moments in a Hitchcock movie. Without doubt it's a neat trick. But it is, unfortunately, a trick. Like Anthony Perkins's taxidermied mother in *Psycho*, Mrs. Whitmore is a prop, wheeled out to spook us into belief. We leave her knowing no more than we knew at the outset about what it is like to be Paul or how, among all the possible actions for securing safety and redress, Paul's selection narrowed precipitately down to murder.

"One wants a theory that fits all occasions," says Liz at the end of the novel, "but there isn't one." It's pretty late in the day for Liz, who is supposedly a psychotherapist, to be discovering the inefficiency of explanations that ignore the particular in favor of the general. Psychotherapy, after all, consists of the disclosure of idiosyncratic meanings, the deeply personal ways we make sense of our experience. Of course, many novelists also seek out these depths, though so

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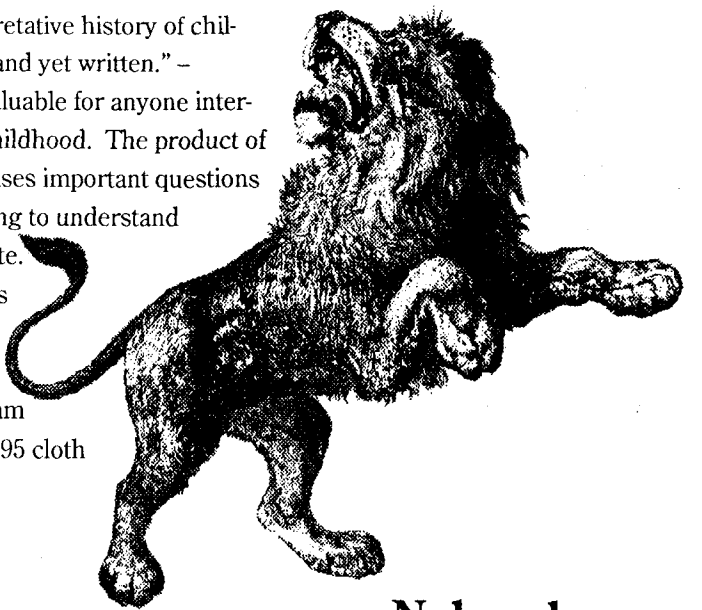

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far Margaret Drabble has not been among them. She has preferred to remain on the surface, perfecting a display of incident and dialogue. Here, once again, she presents a group of initially credible characters who neither develop nor deepen over the course of the narrative.

She's done only what she can do easily, which frustrates success. More is needed, more and different: more understanding of her characters' crotchets, motives and ideas, and a different, layered treatment of their development. Were Drabble to sink within the experience of her characters as they evolved, she also might be less ticked off about her job. Who, after all, wants to keep on polishing that same unrelievedly expansive surface? For Drabble, down could be the way out. □

She Was There

CAROL HURD GREEN

MARY HEATON VORSE: The Life of an American Insurgent. *By Dee Garrison. Temple University Press. 391 pp. $27.95.*

Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, frequently traveled with Mary Heaton Vorse to the scenes of strikes and labor protests. She remembered Vorse as being valiant in the cause of the workers but never free from the need to help "support her children and her children's children." These two imperatives of Vorse's life—her devotion to her work and her struggle to respond to the needs of her family—more often than not incompatible, shape Dee Garrison's extensive and well-researched biography.

The extent is dictated by the length and remarkable activism of Vorse's life. Born to a well-to-do family in Amherst, Massachusetts, in 1874, Vorse worked as a writer and advocate for justice through the 1950s. She engaged in "her last campaign" at the age of 91, supporting a young clergyman who was one of the first to protest the Vietnam War. Vorse died in 1966 in Provincetown, in the house she had bought in 1907 and that had provided a quiet center and refuge through tumultuous and often tragic years.

With her first husband, Bert Vorse, Mary Heaton Vorse was the earliest of the New Yorkers to come to Provincetown. The town's subsequent fame as a center for bohemian culture and the arts is in many ways traceable to her. As Garrison points out, Vorse is most often remembered not for the large and important body of her writing but because the Provincetown Players had their beginnings on her dock.

She was rarely in Provincetown, however: In her 80s, listing the events of her life in order to try to make sense of it, she ruefully noted the long periods of time when she was far from home. Baptized into the labor movement by the Lawrence textile strike in 1912, she became a faithful convert and increasingly prominent spokesperson for workers struggling for justice. Vorse had gone to Lawrence with Joe O'Brien, a lively, passionate socialist whom she married that year. (Bert Vorse had died in 1910, on the same day as her mother, while Vorse was on her first European assignment as a journalist; the marriage had long been troubled.) In Lawrence she met Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Carlo Tresca and Bill Haywood, responded to the sense of community among workers and found a way to orient her life: The "new career of labor reporter was born at Lawrence." Vorse was "too critical to believe in a perfect society and too comfortable to accept the life of a union organizer," Garrison notes. In addition, her "choices were severely restricted by the need to care for and support two small children. But she could do one thing. She could try to make others as angry as she was."

Joe O'Brien died in 1915, once more leaving Vorse a widow without financial resources and now responsible for three children. (She was in her 60s before all of her children were self-supporting, a somber thought in these days of late parenthood.) Frequently away from them on assignments, always placating live-in nurses, she felt guilty but also exhilarated by her work and by her roles: as the "foremost pioneer of labor journalism," an international correspondent and a "distinguished novelist," as a local paper described her when she arrived in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, to

Carol Hurd Green is Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences at Boston College and co-editor of Notable American Women: The Modern Period *(Harvard University Press).*

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involve herself in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' organizing drive.

Moving away from the liberalism of her background, Vorse embraced political and cultural radicalism and aligned herself with feminist causes and groups. She loved to defy convention. She was a member of Heterodoxy, that remarkable group of Greenwich Village women leaders who gathered to affirm a prophetic feminism and to support one another in their convictions. In Belgrade in 1919 reporting on relief efforts, she "scandalized" the city, according to the manager of the Red Cross office there, by chain-smoking in public and addressing revolutionary meetings. She "actually ate with a fork in one hand and a cigarette in the other," he reported indignantly. Early introduced to the Village gospel of sexual freedom, she enjoyed affairs and flirtations. Usually in charge of such matters, she suffered deeply from her rejection by Robert Minor, the radical political cartoonist and organizer. She had delighted in Minor's vitality and devotion to work: Never before had she "met anyone . . . who seemed as unafraid of life as I." Pregnant by him at 47, she suffered a miscarriage just before he announced that he was leaving her. Morphine was part of the prescribed treatment; it led to a tragic addiction and a "smashup," from which she was long in recovering.

Minor's involvement with the Communist Party brought Vorse under increasing suspicion and surveillance during the Red Scare of the 1920s. She had not shared his politics, however. Garrison defends Vorse against the charges of Stalinism leveled at her by many on the socialist left, but she is ambivalent about her political judgment. Vorse's views would have seemed "uninformed and utopian" to either the "great Allied leaders" or the "great Marxist rulers." Her "social thought, in 1919 as for the rest of her life, had carried her into the no man's land of political philosophy cordoned off and marked 'effeminate,' 'visionary,' 'unrealistic.'"

Garrison's devotion to the task of bringing to Vorse the historical attention she deserves falters when she cannot praise. Later in the book, describing Vorse in a lonely old age, she quotes without comment an unpleasant assessment by Ann Craton Blankenhorn, who had worked with Vorse in Pottsville: Mary had lived too long, she was "petulant, nervous, and poor. . . . I have decided she has no inner life."

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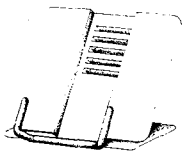

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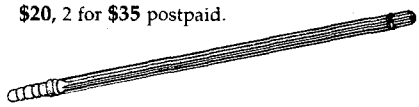

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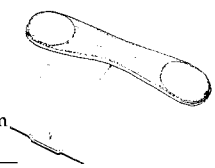

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While Garrison's account of Murray Kempton's positive assessment of Vorse in *Part of Our Time* is in some measure a response, her reluctance to make analytical judgments leaves the reader puzzled.

Dee Garrison sees Vorse's disappearance from history as a direct result of the effects of sexism and the cold war, and she makes a good case for Vorse's importance as a pioneering feminist and labor journalist. Vorse was everywhere from 1912 on: reporting on significant strikes, from the Mesabi Range in 1916 and the tragedy of the 1919 steel strike (in which she was deeply involved) to Passaic in 1926 and Gastonia in 1929. She was with fellow journalist and novelist Josephine Herbst at Flint in 1937 and at the scene of other C.I.O. organizing struggles. She was on the Peace Ship with Jane Addams in 1915, she reported on the rise of Hitler in the 1930s and she was "perhaps the oldest official American war correspondent in World War II." She also published large numbers of stories, most of them "lollypops" to earn money, most concerned with the plight of the modern woman confined (as her powerful mother had been) by social expectations.

Garrison's biography is also a survey of the history of American social movements in the twentieth century. That is both a reason to read the book and a reason for some of its shortcomings. While she documents the tensions and tragedies of Vorse's long career, Garrison does not in the end bring her subject fully to life. She too often paraphrases Vorse when we need to hear her words directly. The problem may lie in the subject: The central importance of Vorse's life is in her presence at so many of the important events of her lifetime and the sympathetic and effective accounts she provided of them. It is difficult to turn that history into biography. □

Mississippi Goddamn

BILL FARRELL

DARK JOURNEY: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow. *By Neil R. McMillen. University of Illinois Press. 430 pp. $27.50.*

Though blacks throughout the South faced disenfranchisement, racial violence, a biased legal system, inadequate education and extreme poverty in the early twentieth century, those in Mississippi endured the greatest repression. Although the majority of its inhabitants were black, no state spent less on black education between 1890 and 1940. White violence against blacks was consistently more ferocious in Mississippi. Between 1889 and 1945, Mississippi accounted for nearly 13 percent of all recorded lynchings. As Neil McMillen, a professor of history at the University of Southern Mississippi, explains in *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow*, "The dominant race throughout the long Jim Crow era, even as in slavery, looked to physical intimidation as an essential tool in the 'management' of Negroes."

At its worst, lynching could mean either burning or torturing the victim to death. Accusations that a black man had raped a white woman frequently resulted in the black being burned at the stake. Though "chivalry" was often the excuse for a lynching, only 12.7 percent of all blacks lynched in Mississippi between 1889 and 1935 had been accused of rape. The allegation of murdering a white was the most frequent pretext for lynching, but lesser affronts—such as "talking disrespectfully" to a white, owing 50 cents, organizing sharecroppers and being "too prosperous"—also provoked lynchings.

Until well after World War I, members of a lynch mob rarely attempted to conceal their identities, for they knew that their actions would be condoned by white society. Occasionally, newspapers and other white institutions might condemn a "bad" lynching—a mob action that was unduly brutal, badly organized or resulted in assaults on the black community. Conversely, a well-organized, disciplined lynching, resulting in the hanging of one victim, would be praised as "good." In at least one incident, a lynching during which the victim was burned to death was so described.

Lynching distorted the judicial system in Mississippi. In order to avoid a lynching when a criminal case involved a black defendant and a white victim, the court would frequently grant the defendant a swift trial—often less than one

Bill Farrell is an attorney and freelance writer in the New York metropolitan area who writes frequently about Southern history.

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hour—and sentence him to death. Under these circumstances, conviction usually was assured. The judges believed, usually incorrectly, that they could thereby prevent mob violence and uphold the "majesty of the law."

Jim Crow corrupted justice in other ways. A black convicted of murdering a white might be lynched if he were sentenced to life imprisonment. A black defendant acquitted of such a charge could be murdered after he was released. Thus, in Clarksdale in 1925, a jury found Lindsey Coleman not guilty of murdering a white plantation manager. During the trial, Coleman's lawyer, Thomas Ward—who was Grand Dragon of Mississippi's Ku Klux Klan—continually warned authorities that his client might fall victim to mob violence. After his acquittal, Coleman was seized as he left the courtroom with his attorney and shot to death. (After Coleman's murder, the Grand Dragon supported legislation making it easier to remove sheriffs who did not protect prisoners from mob violence.)

A black accused of murdering a black, on the other hand, often faced an indulgent prosecutor offering a favorable plea bargain. The intervention of a prominent white could readily change the situation in the defendant's favor. Thus, in one case a planter's intercession led to the release of a murderer after one year in prison so he could return to the fields. In another instance, a black man was acquitted of murder because of the influence of a prominent white, causing the victim's widow to comment that Mississippi's whites did not want to lose a good hand to prison because "the live nigger is worth more than the dead one."

Clearly, as McMillen illustrates, planters and other powerful whites could manipulate the legal system to guarantee their labor supply. Yet this raises other questions that he ignores. Did white intervention reinforce the authority of the planter and make him even more central to the lives of the laborers? Could this intervention have separated blacks and poor whites even further, thus strengthening the position of the upper classes? McMillen's report that planters punished theft by black employees by whipping them rather than reporting them to the authorities and risking losing their labor if they went to jail strongly suggests that planters acted to increase their own authority at the expense of formal law. Yet he addresses none of these questions, and his lack of analysis is frustrating.

Mississippi blacks never accepted inferior status. Occasionally they fought back against mob violence, but in most cases such resistance was suicidal. Between the 1890s and the outbreak of World War I, black leaders pursued economic, not political, advancement. They sought alliance with upper-class whites, never recognizing that elite whites were as unsympathetic to black aspirations as lower-class whites. Based upon flawed assumptions, this strategy failed, yet there were no real alternatives.

World War I heightened white racial anxieties, engendering fear of black violence. White violence against blacks increased, particularly against veterans. However, the war also opened up job opportunities in industries for blacks willing to go north. Between 1915 and 1920, half a million Southern blacks trekked north, 100,000 of them from Mississippi. Realizing their need for black labor, whites attempted to stop the migration. Sometimes this meant refusing to sell blacks train tickets to the North. A few white leaders recognized that black living conditions needed improvement. In the early 1920s, planters offered tenants higher wages, better housing, greater autonomy and healthier diets. When the labor shortage ceased, however, so did white interest in racial conciliation. In fact, between the wars black economic opportunity contracted.

Blacks achieved progress in Mississippi only after national socioeconomic developments allowed it. However, McMillen does not elaborate on these changes. He notes that World War II substantially eroded barriers to social change, but does not examine its impact in detail. Instead, focusing on its ideological implications, McMillen writes,

FOR NOW

Surely in some other realm,
love, our enterprise, is run
free of all these contradictions
or with all of them resolved
into contrapuntal harmony.

What we have must suffice.

Fish-bird beneath the ribs
the heart never knows
if to sing, when to strike.

Yet asleep and back to back
lovers dream the unsteady heart
made steadfast and love, a rose,
that blossomed and is about to,
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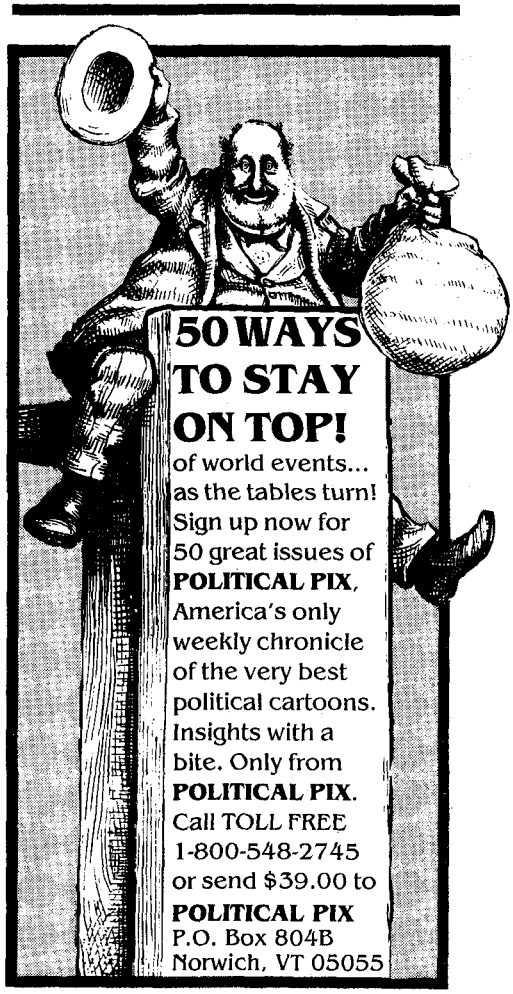

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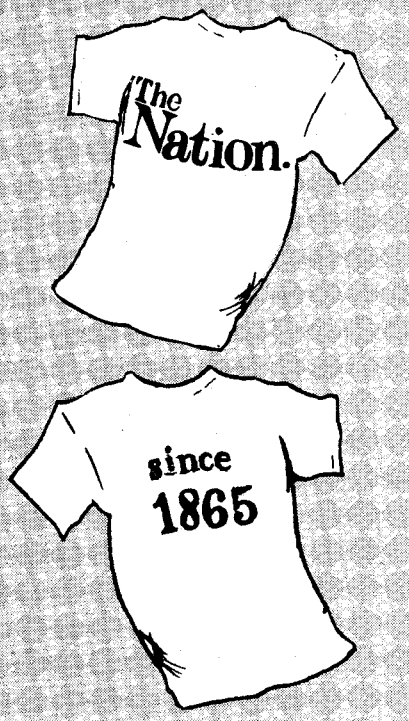

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"The war against Hitler's master race ideology marks the beginning of Jim Crow's end, the moment when the gathering challenge of black unrest began the sharp, rapid ascent that would make it a black revolution." As blacks began to envision a new future, they developed new strategies that led in the direction of the militant protests of the 1950s and 1960s. □

BOOK NOTES.

NICE WORK. *By David Lodge. Viking. 277 pp. $18.95.*

In England, David Lodge is always compared to Kingsley Amis—which is unfair because, although they both write comedies of bad manners, Amis hasn't really been funny since *Lucky Jim*, and Lodge gets funnier with every novel, from *The British Museum Is Falling Down* to *Changing Places* to *Small World*, with time off for four books of criticism and a quarter-century of professing English literature at the University of Birmingham. Besides, Lodge is clearly a much nicer person. In *Nice Work* he's kind to almost everybody he makes fun of, and both sexes. Half of *Nice Work*, inside the redbrick University of Rummidge, is the sort of college novel likely to remind readers less of Amis than of Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe* or Randall Jarrell's *Pictures From an Institution*. It's about the knowledge factory gone berserk. "In this place," says Robyn Penrose, "reading is work. Reading is production. And what we produce is meaning." But the other half of *Nice Work* is about another sort of factory, producing car parts instead of knowledge, motors instead of meaning. When these two modes of production meet, there's a very messy dialectic.

Robyn is young, feminist and Marxist, with a bad case of semiotics. She teaches the nineteenth-century English Industrial Novel, in which worthies like Dickens and Disraeli felt bad, of course, about the dark satanic mills but "failed to resolve the ideological contradictions inherent in their own situation in society." Because anything like a revolution was unthinkable for such novelists, they solved the personal problems of their characters by fortuitous marriage, miraculous inheritance, sudden death or emigration to Australia. Personally, Robyn doesn't believe in "character"; it's a "bourgeois myth." Nor does she believe in love: "Sexual desire was a play of signifiers, an infinite deferment and displacement of anticipated pleasure which the brute coupling of the signifieds temporarily interrupted." Novelists themselves are capitalists of the imagination: "He or she invents a product which consumers didn't know they wanted until it was made available, manufactures it with the assistance of purveyors of risk capital known as publishers, and sells it in competition with makers of marginally different products of the same kind."

For reasons too preposterous to go into, Robyn teams up with Vic Wilcox, managing director of a recession-threatened engineering firm of "metal-bashers," a blacking factory every bit as frightful as anything in Dickens. Vic doesn't believe in love, either. Until he finds Robyn in his arms in unlikely Frankfurt, all he believes in is the profit motive. From Robyn, Vic learns how to feel. From Vic, Robyn learns to get real. Wouldn't you know it: Their personal problems and ideological contradictions are resolved by a legacy . . . *and* a marriage proposal . . . *and* emigration—by every coincidence except death. Meanwhile, we're treated to a romp through the competing jargons of the academy and postmodern capitalism, the savories of sex, the drearies of Thatcherite England and the anachronistic peculiarities of the nineteenth-century English mindset gone twentieth-century bananas. Very nice.

THE AFTERNOON OF A WRITER. *By Peter Handke. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 86 pp. $14.95.*

Peter Handke's early novel *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* and his semifictionalized memoir of his mother's suicide, *A Sorrow Beyond Dreams*, were both fiery gems. Since then, the Austrian novelist, poet, playwright and translator seems to me to have been painting himself into a corner and then complaining that he couldn't move. His books got thinner and more exasperating. So what if language itself were the secret hero of listless narratives like *A Moment of True Feeling*, *The Left-Handed Woman* and *Repetition*? We'd been here before—at this impasse, in this trap—in the superior company of Kafka and Rilke and Sartre. I found myself preferring Handke's collaborations with the filmmaker Wim Wenders. At least in the movies all that language was attached to something I could look at,

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even if what I was looking at was urban masochism. Handke's latest, *The Afternoon of a Writer*, is a reproach and reminder. We go on reading these complicated Europeans through their depressive phases until they finally get it right, and then we're dazzled.

A nameless writer in a nameless Central European city leaves the warmth of his room and his cat for a December walk among the ruins. He crosses bridges, looks into windows, stops at a cafe, reads a newspaper and a letter, meets a couple of colleagues, witnesses an accident. The city itself is language, with its "distance" and its "limits"; "its concentrated din of traffic coming from all directions . . . comparable to the region on the fringe of dreams." This city of language assails him with humming and fragments, "a hodgepodge of dots and spirals," wavy lines and mutilated cuneiform, musical intervals, whispering sibilants, chords and squeaks and silence. He finds himself in a bar, on trial, accused of lying. His work "is something in which material is next to nothing, structure almost everything; something that rotates on its axis without the help of a flywheel; something whose elements hold one another in suspension [and] which cannot be worn out by use." He stands for what the crowd detests: "daydreaming, handmade writing, dissent, and ultimately art."

Against this city there is another language, his own weather, the seasons of his dreaming: "The snow in the air could have been flying seeds, the snow on the ground could have been fallen blossoms. The rounding of the image gave emptiness a radiance." At a deserted playground, a swing still moves in emptiness: "The writer watched it until the aftereffect of the child's motion had dwindled to a mere trembling of ropes in the snowy wind. 'Emptiness, my guiding principle . . . my beloved.'" If emptiness is his beloved, "slowness" is his "illumination." Why, he asks, "had no one ever invented a god of slowness?" I can't tell you how this writer, out of namelessness, the city and the weather, manages to reaffirm his vocation. I can only tell you that this vocation—the puzzle of the self, "a long-forgotten wonderment"—has never before been so wonderfully affirmed, not even at the end of *A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*. Carry on, we're told: "Portray. Transmit. Continue to work the most ephemeral of materials, my breath; be its craftsman." JOHN LEONARD

MUSIC.

GENE SANTORO

The Grateful Dead

The Grateful Dead have logged a quarter-century in a peculiar counterculture netherworld where they thrive long after their contemporaries have either bailed out, gone stale or started producing corporate ads. The Dead's sheer longevity—they released a solid if unspectacular new album, aptly titled *Built to Last* (Arista), on Halloween—is ironic in several ways. A typical Grateful Dead concert (like those held in mid-October at New Jersey's Meadowlands Arena, part of a national tour running through December) defies the apparently ironclad rules of arena performing: no massive light show, no choreographed band steps, no constant patter, no fixed set list. Then there's the Dead's legendary willingness to break open any song for extended jamming, a strategy that takes uncontemporary chances even as it bucks the current soundbite mentality.

That's partly due to their origins. Their nucleus—bluegrass banjo/guitar picker Jerry Garcia, folk/jazz guitarist Bob Weir and blues-drenched organist/harpist Ron (Pigpen) McKernan—hooked up in 1964 to play Bay Area coffeehouses as Mother McCree's Uptown Jug Champions, then soon added r&b drummer Bill Kreutzmann and jazz trumpeter and electronic-composer-turned-bassist Phil Lesh. The sounds that came spilling out tossed together musical ingredients with results that transcended Summer of Love slogans.

The Dead paralleled 1960s jazzers in their desire to explore and appropriate Caribbean, African, Middle Eastern and Far Eastern sounds; they also picked up on the "free" ideas of Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane as well as the modal approach of pre-fusion Miles Davis. So their acid jams began to deepen in texture, to become more than guitar solos stretched over a three-chord rock backing repeated ad infinitum. Spearheaded by Garcia's spidery, Django Reinhardt–inspired offbeat triplets and spiraling arpeggios, The Dead remade their rock lineup into something more flexible—Lesh's loping, octave-jumping bass would bounce in loose counterpoint or doubling of Garcia; Weir's increasingly sophisticated chord-

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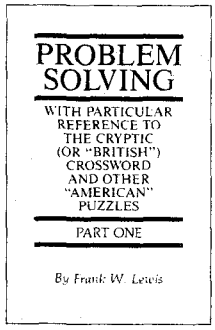
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al and rhythmic variations would cluster around the dual drummers' polyrhythms; and the tune at hand would gradually thicken or atrophy, mutating into free-form space. That approach eventually inspired bands from the Allman Brothers to Television.

Especially since the punk outbreak of the mid-1970s, with its much-needed attack on the arena-inspired, corporate-rock flatulence of bands like Yes and Journey, The Dead have often been criticized for their meandering jams and hippie ways. And in fact, they've done plenty of pointless four-hour-long concerts topped with fingernails-down-the-blackboard vocals. The last couple of years, though, have brought renewed vigor to their shows and their first-ever hit single, "Touch of Grey"—an achievement they can add to being the first band to record on sixteen-track equipment, to invite fans to pirate-tape their radio broadcasts, to create the forerunner of the modern arena P.A. system, to play at the Sphinx, and to stay consistently popular without radio hits among several generations of rockers.

For The Grateful Dead's audience reaches across generations with fanaticism: tie-dyed fans who weren't even born by the time The Dead got to Woodstock, as well as those who were, follow them literally around the globe from show to show, like Pirandellian characters. Part of what draws the Deadheads is the dialogic sense of community that, during The Dead's late-1960s heyday, found voice in the counterculture. The band still infuses that spirit into its extended-family attitudes toward its followers (e.g., by funding hotlines and magazines to disseminate information and tickets) and its longstanding political affiliations (especially with environmental groups like Greenpeace).

As it updates The Dead's core sound with appropriate synthesizer washes, *Built to Last* touches on timely concerns like drug addiction and the rape of the earth, as well as sometimes fuzzily expressed ones like love and hope—which, after all, were always the messages sent by The Dead's engaging way of being. It's not a great album, but it's a great excuse to catch them on this tour. For when they're playing as well as they're playing now, their balletic, democratic communication validates the old slogan: There is nothing like a Grateful Dead concert. That may explain why they, unlike most of their jaded contemporaries, have avoided the irrelevance of nostalgia. □

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Targets
(six colors on red ground)

Skateboard Kids
(Green black white red)

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Wall St. Men
(Blue magenta chartreuse)

S.O.S.
(red pink grey black)

Woman Seeks Man
(Blue orange black white)

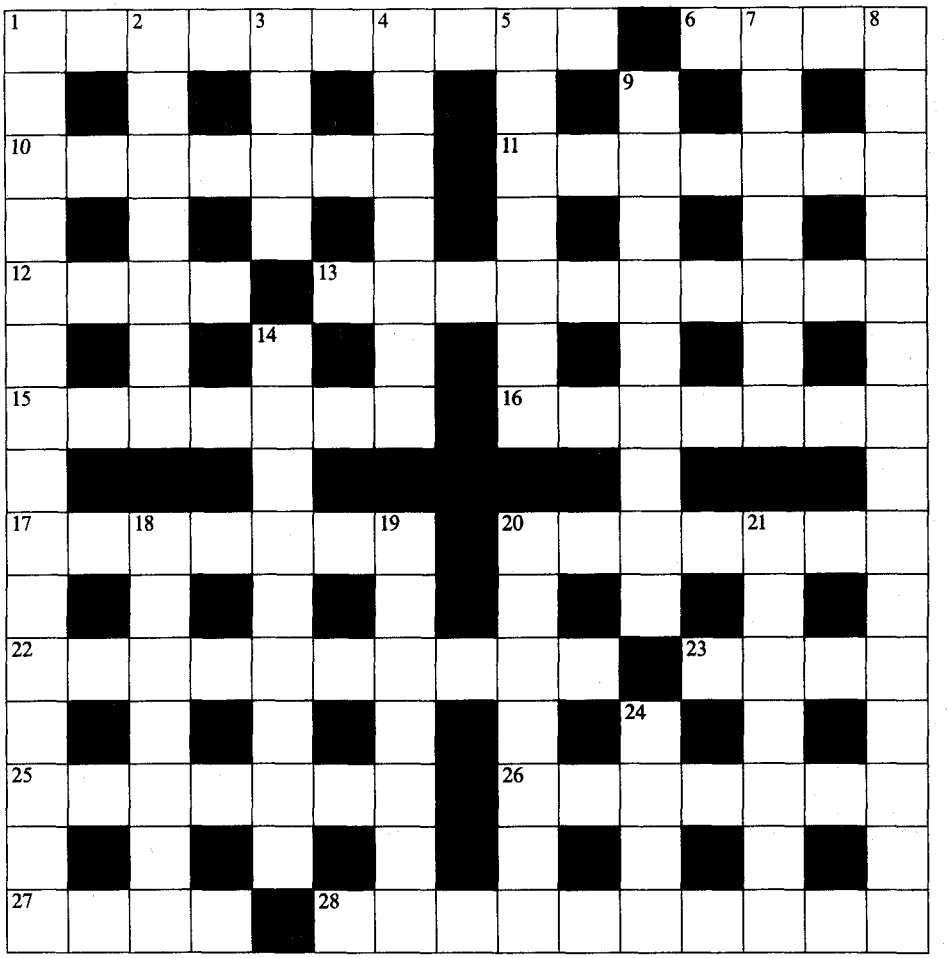
Artist in New York
(Blue turquoise gold black)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2266

■	S	M	E	A	R	■	■	S	C	O	T	C	H	■
C	■	A	■	R	■	G	■	A	■	R	■	O	■	E
L	A	S	A	G	N	E	■	L	E	A	T	H	E	R
E	■	C	■	U	■	T	■	L	■	F	■	O	■	A
F	L	A	G	S	T	A	F	F	■	T	Y	R	O	L
T	■	R	■	E	■	W	■	O	■	■	■	S	■	D
■	B	A	B	Y	C	A	R	R	I	A	G	E	S	■
■	■	■	■	E	■	Y	■	T	■	P	■	■	■	■
■	W	I	N	D	O	W	S	H	O	P	P	E	R	■
C	■	N	■	■	■	I	■	E	■	L	■	P	■	S
A	N	T	I	C	■	T	A	B	L	E	T	A	L	K
R	■	R	■	H	■	H	■	E	■	C	■	U	■	A
T	S	U	N	A	M	I	■	S	C	A	R	L	E	T
E	■	S	■	S	■	T	■	T	■	R	■	E	■	E
L	E	T	T	E	R	■	■	S	T	A	T	E	■	■

Crossword Puzzle No. 2267

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Made up a hotel bed at a fixed price usually. (5,1'4)
6 Travelers may go by this in return, according to one whose word may not always be trusted. (4)
10 I would shortly get caught up in what is happening, which is obvious.(7)
11 Pressing business when you are? (7)
12 Gory business, but that's what the party might turn to! (4)
13 Energy, according to the money-maker, coming from the oil plant. (10)
15 Don't get confused about the revolutionary leader—it could be recorded on a stick! (7)
16 Disease caused by the hayseed to which everything comes back. (7)
17 A pair, as they sometimes say, seen when you get to pen Erskine. (7)
20 What the brewer did, possibly, is put the beginning of 13 in Rosinante, for example. (7)
22 There's more than one Small, Small World! (10)
23 and 24 down Evidently such as Shakespeare is fine, but you need an attitude of friendliness with this—not the Salvation Army! (4,4)
25 Garnets might be unusual? Very unusual! (7)
26 You might find several banks in one, and in time, err badly. (7)
27 Shelter for sheep or birds, proving a point on a little bed. (4)
28 Perhaps one from Houston goes to Labels for Less, saving fifty on something to check the altitude. (10)

DOWN

1 M (Greek)—thus (Latin)—might describe it on stage and screen. (3,5,2,5)
2 What one might cross over at a sort of junction, according to a girl from Cork, perhaps. (7)
3 Steven is sometimes said to be, all things being equal. (4)
4 In Idaho, the advantage goes to one who is angry and impatient. (7)
5 One traveling might stumble on something that fits Jack to a T. (7)
7 In it, I always remove manners of getting things done at first. (7)
8 The quality of the best man perhaps shows some dexterity. (5-10)
9 Perhaps Mr. P.L. Boone should have little difficulty with it. (2,7)
14 At least you can get your foot in with them, with fancy hose having things to play with. (9)
18 This might be only part of my story—with the exclusion of Reading, for example, inside. (7)
19 Those who display what might be associated with weddings and babies? (7)
20 The old fort is quiet inside, mules being associated with it. (7)
21 One of those things in the Bible? "In favor" is, for example. (7)
24 See 23 across

CORRECTION: In puzzle number 2265, clue 23 should have said, "This many 22s" instead of "This many 29s."

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